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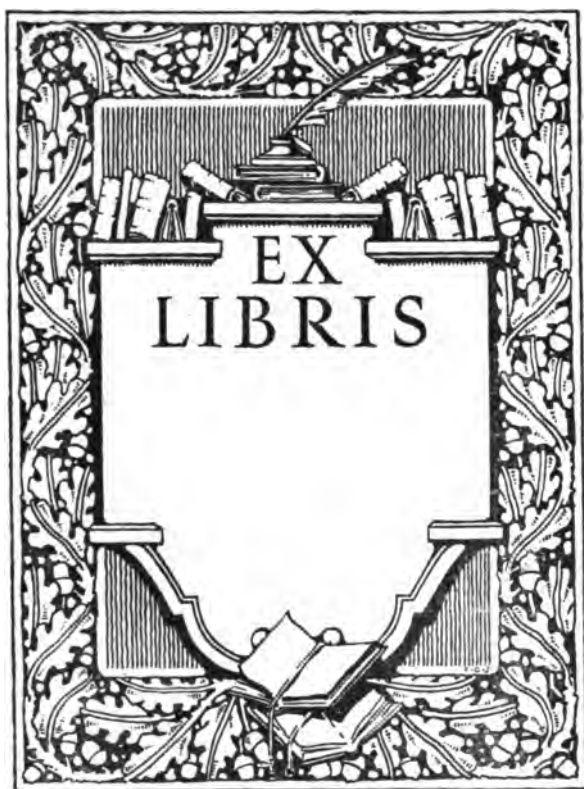
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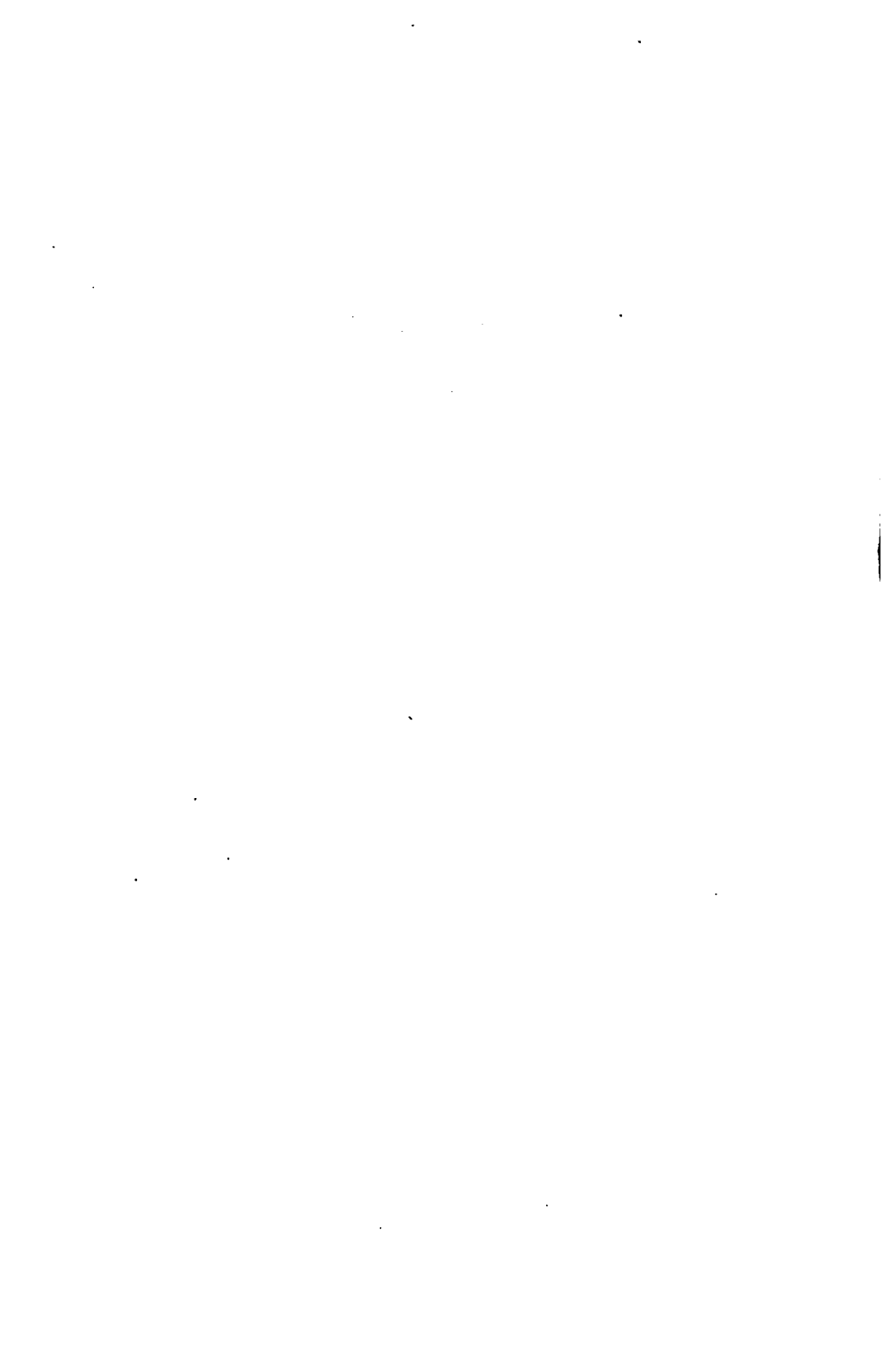








**THE STORY OF A
RED CROSS UNIT IN SERBIA**



Univ. of
California



H.R.H. ALEXANDER, CROWN PRINCE OF SERBIA.

THE STORY OF A
Red Cross Unit in Serbia

BY

JAMES BERRY, B.S., F.R.C.S.,
F. MAY DICKINSON BERRY, M.D., B.S.,
W. LYON BLEASE, LL.M.,
AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE UNIT



LONDON
J. & A. CHURCHILL
7, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET
1916

Univ. of
California



Alexander

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LONDON
J. & A. CHURCHILL
7, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET
1916

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ABSTRACT

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Dedicated

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TO

H.R.H.

ALEXANDER,

CROWN PRINCE OF SERBIA,

WHO

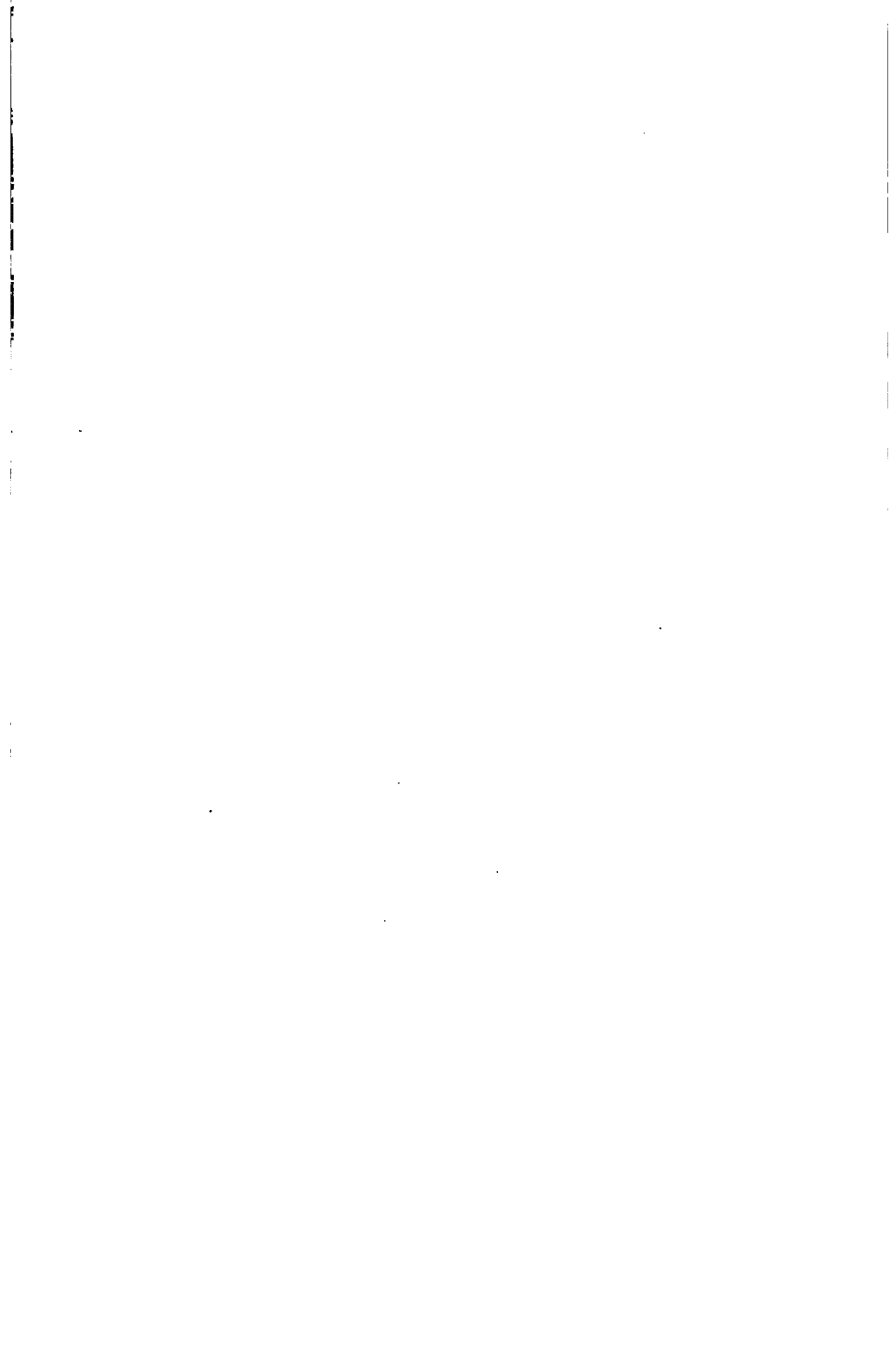
BY HIS MILITARY SKILL, HIS ENERGY, AND HIS ABILITY,

HAS DONE SO MUCH FOR HIS COUNTRY AND

FOR THE CAUSE OF THE ALLIES

*Though Serbia bows her stricken head,
Hope whispers that she is not dead,
That Serbia, like the Phoenix, dies
A Greater Serbia to arise.*

458049



PREFACE

THIS book has been written at the request of many friends who wished to have some permanent record of the work done by our Mission, the "Anglo-Serbian Hospital," or the "Royal Free Hospital" Unit as it is also called, during our year in Serbia. It may also be of some interest to the general public as a plain story of one of the many subsidiary enterprises undertaken by the British peoples during the Great War. We hope that the details of the sanitary precautions adopted to prevent the occurrence and spread of typhus and other diseases may perhaps be of use to others who may be called upon in the future to set up hospitals under similar conditions in foreign countries.

Our intimate association in war time both with the Serbs and with our Austro-Hungarian enemies gave us an insight into the character of both these nations which was of extreme interest to ourselves and which we have endeavoured to portray in the following pages. Indeed the whole of our year's stay in Serbia was a strange mixture of tragedy, comedy and pathos. We have come away with a warm feeling of respect and affection for the simple, kind-hearted and generous Serbian people whose history is so full of glorious deeds that it deserves to

be better known in this country, and whose struggles for freedom and emancipation from oppression have been so heroic.

We further take this opportunity of expressing our gratitude to the many friends who by their labour or contributions made our work possible and of passing on to them their due share of the thanks so freely given us by the Serbs among whom we laboured. So long as the route from England was open we were kept well supplied with dressings and other hospital necessities as well as with clothes for distribution, and we owe much to the friends who sent contributions, organised meetings and working parties, or who apportioned us a share in the out-put from Red Cross depôts—of these we would specially mention the Kensington and the St. Marylebone War Hospital Supply Depôts.

It is, however, not only to Great Britain and her Oversea Dominions that our thanks must go. Friends in the United States, especially at Baltimore and at Rochester, Minn., have sent us contributions and taken interest in our work.

We wish to thank also the members of our Committee and especially the honorary secretary, Mr. Reginald Garratt, on whom much labour devolved, and to whose indefatigable zeal and industry the Mission owes so much.

With the exception of two chapters which have been contributed by Dr. Helen Boyle and Lieutenant Donald C. Norris, R.A.M.C., the book has been written by ourselves and Mr. W. Lyon Blease. All three are jointly responsible, and information has often been contributed by some one other than the

actual writer of the chapter, as shown in the Table of Contents.

The authors are indebted to the Editors of the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Lancet*, the *Nation*, and the *Manchester Guardian* for permission to publish those parts of chapters which have previously appeared in one or other of those publications.

The illustrations (with the exception of Fig. 13) are from photographs by various members of the Unit.

J. B.

F. M. D. B.

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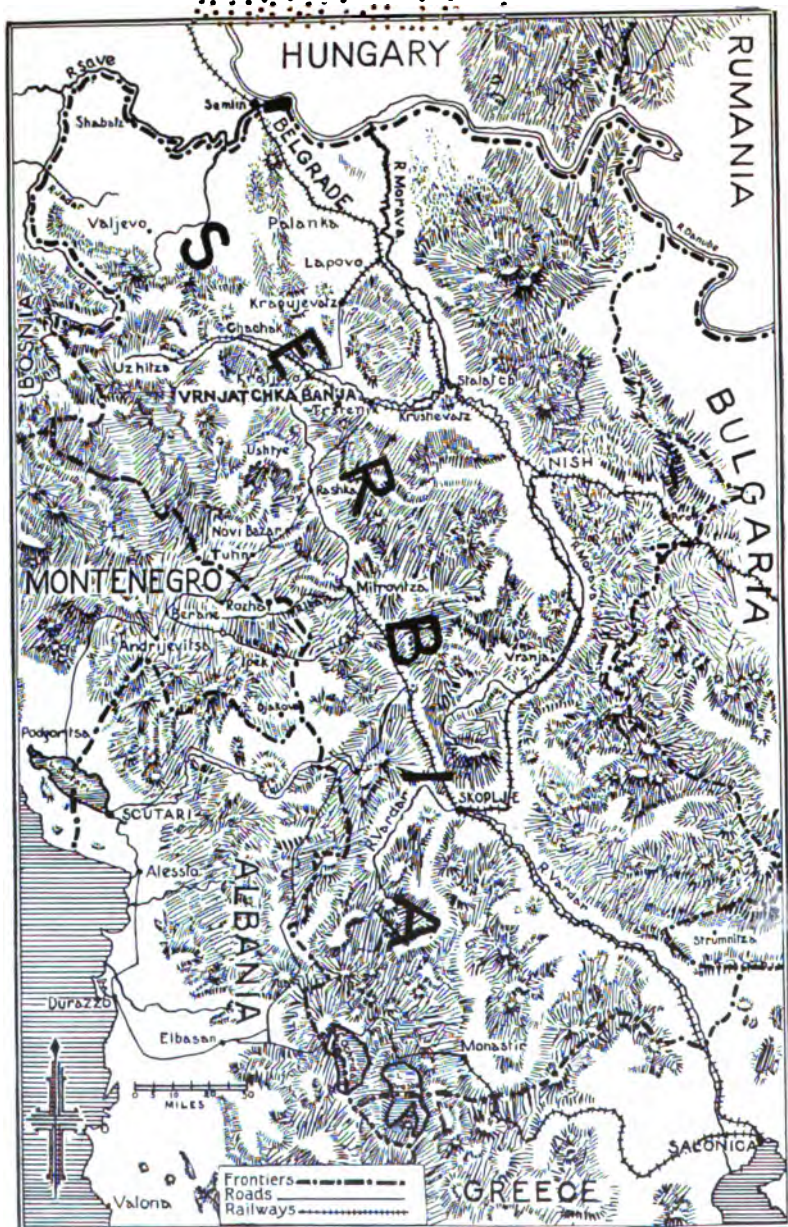
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MAP OF SERBIA.

RED CROSS UNIT

IN SERBIA

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

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The Annexation of Bosnia—Discontent of Slav Subjects of Austria—Trade Routes through the Balkans—Austrian Policy—Wars of 1912 and 1913—Assassination of the Archduke—Austria's Ultimatum—Declaration of War—Serbian Victories—Breakdown of Medical Organisation in Serbia—Mme. Grouitch's Mission to England.

THE trouble became acute in 1908. When Austria, in defiance of the Treaty of Berlin, suddenly annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Powers made no effective protest, Serbia was naturally furious and war seemed imminent. These two Turkish provinces, inhabited by people of Slav race, had been for thirty years administered by Austria, who had certainly done much for the improvement of the country. But her rule was never popular, and the annexation seemed to put an end for ever to the dream of union with Serbia.

Russia, exhausted by her recent struggle with Japan, was not at that time in a position to support Serbia in a conflict with Austria, and Serbia had to

acquiesce in the annexation. There were other troubles also which threatened the peace. A large proportion of the subjects of Austria are Slavs who are discontented with Austro-Hungarian rule. The inhabitants of Croatia, Slavonia, and the neighbouring parts of southern Hungary are almost entirely Slav, and look forward to union with Serbia and other portions of Serbia Irredenta, the whole to form a great Yugoslav kingdom (*Jug* is Serbian for South). The Balkan peninsula consists largely of mountains, and through it pass, and have passed from time immemorial, the two great trade routes leading from the Danube valley and the plains of Hungary to Salonica and Constantinople respectively. One of these routes runs up the Morava and down the Vardar valleys to Salonica, following the course now taken by the only railway which traverses Serbia from end to end (see map). The other route is that which, branching off from the first at Nish, passes by Pirot into Bulgaria and so by Sofia and Philippopolis to Constantinople. Thus Serbia lies across these main routes leading from Austria-Hungary (and Germany) to the Ægean Sea and Asia Minor. Bulgaria lies across the path to Constantinople. Just as in the Middle Ages the Turks, desirous of advancing into Central Europe, found Serbia in the way and had to annihilate and absorb her, so in our own time do Austria-Hungary and Germany find that she blocks the way to Salonica and Constantinople. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 showed Serbia what she might herself expect. Not long after this event an Austrian newspaper in close touch with the military

General Staff did not scruple to write : " A conflict with Serbia and Montenegro is inevitable, and the later it comes the more expensive will it be for us : when we have obtained hegemony in the Balkans, then will commence the march to the East and we shall assimilate the Slav peoples."

Between Serbia and Bulgaria there has been deplorable enmity, practically from the time when both first established themselves on the Balkan lands. Each at one time—Bulgaria under Simeon (*c.* 1000), Serbia under Dushan (*c.* 1350)—has been in possession of almost the whole of the peninsula. But, in the main, Serbia has been limited to the western, Bulgaria to the eastern, half of the peninsula.

Both were overwhelmed by the catastrophe of the Turkish invasion of the fourteenth century, and for some five hundred years both, like Bosnia, were but Turkish provinces. But as the Turkish Empire, which at one time threatened even Vienna itself, gradually receded, the various Danubian provinces succeeded in shaking off the Turkish yoke. Serbia, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, under the successive leadership of Karageorge and Milosh Obrenovitch, gradually acquired her freedom. In 1882, her Prince Milan obtained the title of King—a title which quite recently has also been assumed by Bulgaria's ruler, Ferdinand.

Austria's policy has been to promote enmity between these two States. It was she who egged on her tool Milan to provoke the unfortunate Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885, which both countries now recognise to have been a grave mistake.

In 1912, the Quadruple Alliance, of Serbia, Bul-

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would have been merely playing Austria's game, for assuredly he would have been brought back again at the head of an Austrian army. For some two years repeated attempts were made to induce him to abdicate. But in vain. The tales about the revolting details of the assassination have been much exaggerated.

The Archduke had been murdered by men of Serb race although not of Serb nationality, so it was loudly proclaimed through Austria that the "Serbs" were to be held responsible and a "punitive" expedition against Serbia was to be undertaken. It was thought that the theory of Serbia's guilt would be accepted by most of the European nations and would prevent their interference in the matter. So Austria, backed by Germany, went to war with Serbia, believing she would have a walk over. An outrageous ultimatum, couched in terms which no independent State had ever before addressed to another independent State, and to which an answer was demanded within forty-eight hours, was sent to Serbia. A favourable answer was not intended or expected by Austria, and great was the annoyance when Serbia, yielding to the counsel of Russia and other Powers, gave way to all the Austrian demands except two, which could not be complied with until her Constitution had been revised, and even this she promised to do, offering also to submit any further points to the arbitration of the Hague Tribunal. But this almost abject, and certainly wholly unexpected, submission on the part of Serbia did not satisfy Austria, who on July 28th, 1914, declared war. Immediately afterwards Austria awoke to the

fact that she was about to provoke a European conflagration, for she found that Russia was in earnest and ready to take up arms in defence of her little sister in the Balkans. For the first few days after the declaration of war Austria took no active steps beyond throwing a few shells into Belgrade. She became alarmed at the serious turn of events, consented on July 31st to modify her demands, and expressed her willingness to reopen negotiations. But it was too late. "Germany, having jockeyed Austria into a position from which there was no escape, declared war on Russia the next day."*

On August 12th the Austrians crossed the Save and Drina at various points and invaded the north-west corner of Serbia in great force. After smaller combats at various places, the great five days' battle of the Jadar (August 18th-23rd) finally drove the invaders out of Serbia.

In September Austrian troops again entered the country and succeeded in establishing themselves in small numbers at certain points. But it was not until the beginning of November that the Austrians again advanced in great force, the Serbs retiring before them to the east and south. At the end of this month the invaders held a line extending almost right across North Serbia from Chachak to Belgrade and thought that victory was assured. But the Serbs had retired, not because they were beaten, but because their supply of ammunition was almost exhausted. Receiving just in time a fresh supply from the French, they made that wonderful rally which has been one of the great events of the war,

* Petrovitch.

and, advancing with fury upon the too confident Austrians drove them for the second time completely out of the country. By December 14th Belgrade itself had to be evacuated and the land was free once more. The rout was phenomenal, and the Serbs, with comparatively little loss on their side, had slain many thousands of the enemy and captured vast stores of guns and ammunition. As the result of the various engagements, between sixty and seventy thousand Austrian prisoners remained in Serbian hands.

But now fresh troubles of a different kind began. The medical organisation was wholly unable to cope with the vast numbers of sick and wounded. In the cold of a Balkan winter typhus fever began to raise its ugly head. It was under these circumstances that urgent appeals to allied countries were issued by the Serbs. Mme. Mabel Grouitch, the energetic wife of M. Slavko Grouitch, Serbian Foreign Secretary, hurried to London to plead in person for her sorely distressed and gallant country.*

J. B.

* Those who desire further information on the events immediately preceding the outbreak of the great war should read "*J'accuse*," published anonymously by a German in Switzerland (English translation, Hodder and Stoughton, popular edition, 2s.), and "*La Guerre*," by Professor Ernest Denis, of the University of Paris. Both give a careful analysis of the diplomatic documents published officially by the various belligerents in their White Papers, Blue Books, etc. For earlier Serbian history, Miller's "*Balkan States*" (Story of the Nations series, publisher, Fisher Unwin), and Petrovitch's "*Serbia*" (publisher, Harrap & Co., London, 1915) may be consulted. The latter gives a good account of events up to December, 1914. All these books are cheap and easily accessible.

CHAPTER II.

THE FORMATION OF THE UNIT.

The Meeting at Steinway Hall—Mme. Slavko Grouitch—Need of Medical Help in Serbia—Visit to Paris and Boulogne—Invitation of Serbian Government—Kindness of the Admiralty—Gift of £1,000 from the Serbian Relief Fund—Help from British Red Cross Society—Private and Public Appeal for Funds—Buying of Stores—Nurses and Medical Staff—V.A.D.'s—Volunteer Orderlies—Financial Responsibility—Formation of a Committee—Departure from Avonmouth on Admiralty Transport—Malta—Salonica—Journey to Nish—Serbian Red Cross Society—Unit attached to Reserve Military Hospital of Vrnjatchka Banja.

THE seed out of which our Unit grew was planted at a meeting held in aid of Serbia at the Steinway Hall in December, 1914.

Being interested in Serbia, and hoping to meet our old friend Mme. Grouitch, we left our comfortable fireside and sallied forth to attend this meeting. There we heard afresh, what at that time was frequently in the papers, how great was the need in Serbia of doctors and hospital appliances. Mme. Grouitch was the accredited agent of the Serbian Government. She had left Serbia on a mission to Great Britain and to her native country of the United States to obtain and organise help, medical and otherwise, for the Serbians.

After the meeting I said to Mme. Grouitch, with but little idea of the suggestion being taken seriously, "How would Colonel S——" (mentioning a dis-

tinguished Serbian friend) "like my husband to go out to help him in his hospital?"

"No," said she, "that would not work; English and Serbian methods of hospital work are so dissimilar. But why not go out and take a Unit? It is very easy, you ask your friends for money, and it is sure to come rolling in; you buy with it chloroform and other hospital necessities, engage nurses of whom there are many dying to go out; get an invitation from the Serbian Government—and go!" She said further that there were some Americans in Paris who had been collecting money to send medical help to Serbia and might possibly be willing to finance our undertaking.

When we returned home we thought seriously over the scheme, which was not without attractions. In the first place we knew the Balkan States, having visited them many times, and, like everybody who has travelled in those countries, we loved their Slav inhabitants and were always ready to visit them again. In 1904 we had spent a summer holiday cycling in Serbia, and had been present at King Peter's coronation in the Cathedral of Belgrade. We both spoke Serbian a little, French and German fluently, and had a bowing acquaintance also with some of the other languages to be met with in South-Eastern Europe. So now that Serbia was an Ally and asking for help, we felt in some ways that the call was directed to us. Secondly, there was no urgent necessity for us to remain in London, and we were anxious to take a more active share in war work.

The Royal Free Hospital, although one of the great London hospitals with a medical school attached

had been left out of the scheme of London Territorial hospitals, and although some of the wards had been given up to the War Office, the cases sent in were unimportant, and the Medical staff were called on to treat patients with trivial injuries. It seemed to both of us that Mr. Berry should have more opportunity of using his surgical experience in the service of the victims of the war.

For women doctors the War Office had at that time, so they said, no use whatever, though later on the Army Medical authorities took a different attitude.

The scheme, therefore, offered a more extended field of work in the great cause for which all the Allies are fighting.

We decided to visit Paris at any rate, to inquire further into the possibility of co-operation with the Americans about whom we had been told, and to take the opportunity of visiting some of the hospitals.

We reached Paris, a curious journey compared with the familiar one of former days—Harley Street doctors in khaki waiting on the quay for the arrival of the boat ; Boulogne wholly given up to the British, suggesting the days of Henry the Fifth ; the circuitous railway journey ; Paris itself dark, empty and sad, not, as now, securely oblivious of the nearness of the German lines. We returned from Paris just before the New Year, having found that the American co-operation was not to be worked : they had themselves more people who wanted to go out than there was money with which to send them. In Paris, however, we gained some members for our proposed unit ; our colleague Dr. Ulysses Williams, Radio-

grapher to the Royal Free Hospital, who was working at the hospital in the Hotel Majestic under Mr. Cecil Joll ; also Messrs. Gwin, Schwind, Howard, and Norris, the three former volunteer orderlies, the latter a medical student, all working at the same hospital. Both in Paris and Boulogne we visited several hospitals ; at Boulogne we obtained specially interesting information from Major Norrington, who showed us a large warehouse adapted to form an excellent hospital, and introduced us to Mackonochie's rations, which in consequence we took with us in such quantities that in Serbia they were, like the poor, always with us, some even remaining as a legacy to our friend the enemy !

On returning home we felt ourselves irrevocably pledged to carry out the scheme, and for the next three weeks we were qualifying to become simultaneously charity appeal organisers, universal providers, and agents to a registry office.

As a preliminary, a cable was sent by Mme. Grouitch to the Serbian Government, acquainting them with our offer, and to this an answer of cordial acceptance was shortly received.

We obtained leave of absence from the board of the Royal Free Hospital. Mr. Acland, Chairman of the Council of the Medical School, and at that time Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, interested himself in our project, and sent us to the Admiralty, who gave us a most kind reception, and promised free transport for the Unit to Salonika.

Before leaving for Paris we had already communicated with the Chairman of the Serbian Relief Fund, who viewed our scheme sympathetically,

but could give no promise as to help until after a meeting of the Committee. At this meeting, a fortnight later, it was suggested that we might join a unit in process of formation under their auspices, for which an administrator and portion of the staff had already been appointed, although no medical officers had yet been found. This after consideration we declined, finding we should have to sacrifice to a certain extent our independence, which might have proved harmful later, and feeling that it would be better to work with a staff whom we had ourselves selected. The Serbian Relief Fund, however, kindly voted us £1,000, and we received useful information about the selection of stores from their Chairman and Secretary.

We also entered into negotiation with the British Red Cross Society, and received the official sanction necessary for our proposed work as a Red Cross Unit, and were further promised help from the Stores Department. The head of this Department received us with great cordiality, and sent us some blankets, disinfectants, and other useful contributions, besides undertaking the labelling and dispatching of our stores, which was of great assistance.

An appeal was drawn up setting forth Serbia's crying need for doctors and hospitals. This was sent with a personal letter to a large number of friends and acquaintances. It produced a most gratifying response, every post bringing contributions varying from 5s. to £50, while parcels containing clothes, new and old, dressings, bandages, and other hospital requisites poured into the Royal Free Hospital.

The selection of stores was also a great undertaking.

We were largely helped in this by lists of articles that had been supplied to other hospital units, and by the advice of Miss Cox-Davies, the Matron of the Royal Free Hospital, and other experts. We went on the assumption that we might find nothing at our destination—we had heard stories of nurses sleeping on bare boards, and of drugs and food conspicuous by their absence. Besides drugs, dressings, and all ordinary hospital requisites, we took beds for patients and staff, folding tables and chairs, plates and cups, jugs, basins and cooking utensils and a portable army stove, besides food stores in considerable quantities. In fact, when our purchases were completed, we felt prepared to run a hospital of fifty beds on a desert island, or in the most destitute part of devastated Serbia. We hoped to find bread and fresh meat, but even for these we had substitutes in biscuits and Mackonochie rations.

The beds we took were folding beds, convertible into stretchers, supplied by Mr. John Perring, of Putney. These proved to be extremely satisfactory, their only drawbacks being that they were a little apt to collapse when handled by the unwary, and a little too low for the comfort of the nurses, but they were invaluable on account of the small amount of space they required, and for the ease with which patients could be carried out of doors, or elsewhere, in them.

In the intervals of buying stores and writing letters of appeal or thanks we were selecting the *personnel* of the Mission, and we found the "registry office" part of our business a very active one. The news of our project seemed to have spread far and

wide ; persons of whom we had never heard wrote letters or rang us up on the telephone, offering their services to Serbia—some with qualifications, some without. Fortunately we had the assistance of Miss Cox-Davies, who, in spite of being matron of two large hospitals managed to bestow on us much time and interest. Her great experience in hospital organisation and wide knowledge of the nursing profession made her help invaluable. At her suggestion we attempted to secure as our Sister-in-charge Miss Irvine Robertson, who had for a time been sister in one of Mr. Berry's wards in the Royal Free Hospital, had nursed in Bulgaria during the former Balkan War, and could speak a little Serbian. But Miss Robertson, who was working at a military hospital, was bound to the War Office, and the War Office showed no disposition to release her. However, eventually, insistence on the need of Serbia and of her special fitness for the task, with intercession from high quarters, produced the desired effect. Another former Royal Free Hospital sister, Miss Annie Pearce, was nursing at a naval hospital, but was kindly yielded up by the Admiralty. Two other nurses, Misses Bartleet and Gore, had been sisters in large London hospitals, and during the present war had nursed in Belgium, where for a time they had been prisoners in the hands of the Germans. The medical staff was completed by Mr. Panting, surgeon to the Truro Hospital, a tried and experienced surgeon, and Dr. Dorothy Chick, for whom the venture was a trial trip, as she heard only just before starting that she had passed inside the magic portals of the medical profession. Another medical student,

besides Mr. Norris already mentioned, Miss K. Parkinson, joined as a dresser. Two other Royal Free Hospital students were to have been added to the number, but a letter was received from an English medical student working in Serbia, giving such a terrible description of the country, as being utterly disorganised, and so given up to violence and immorality, that it was unsafe for any woman to be there ; this so alarmed the parents of the young ladies that they cried off. I mention this incident because it was the first instance we had of what we were perpetually encountering afterwards, absolutely unfounded rumours with circumstantial details on apparently excellent authority. Whether there is something in the soil of Serbia which favours the growth of such rumours, or whether it is the atmosphere of war which gives them birth I know not ; certainly in the present instance the description of Serbia was as unlike anything we were to find in the future as it was opposed to what we had seen in the past !

A very important branch of a foreign hospital unit has not yet been mentioned, and that is, that of the lady orderlies, or V.A.D.'s. Candidates for this formed a large number of the letter writers and telephone callers already mentioned. The V.A.D. is ubiquitous. Not only does economy favour her use and scarcity of trained nurses often make her a necessity, but such desirable qualities as adaptability, enthusiasm, experience of the world and of travel, and especially a knowledge of foreign languages, are perhaps more generally found among V.A.D.'s than trained nurses, and sometimes largely compensate



FIG. 1.—VRNJATCHKA BANJA.

The large building in the middle foreground is the Drzhavna Hospital.



FIG. 2.—THE TERAPIA HOSPITAL, SEEN FROM THE SCHOOL.



for absence of complete training. All our V.A.D.'s spoke French or German or both; one had nursed in the Boer War, one had run a native hospital in West Africa, and one had had experience of camping in Canada. One, Mrs. Panting, came as dispenser, but was even more in requisition in Serbia as the possessor of a sewing machine! A trained teacher of cookery and domestic science, Miss L. Creighton, came in the capacity of cook. The fact that this lady was the daughter of an Anglican bishop, and herself a Cambridge Graduate, greatly impressed the Serbians, and in fact shed a halo over the whole Unit!

Besides the three other gentlemen orderlies secured in Paris, Mr. Jan Gordon, now artist, formerly engineer, rendered us great service.

A complete list of the Unit is given in the Appendix. On the whole we felt we might well congratulate ourselves on the strength of the staff. Two hospital surgeons of standing, an X-ray specialist, and four sisters from large London Hospitals formed a good average in so small a unit, to say nothing of the varied qualifications of other members. All the members were persons with whom we were personally acquainted, or who were known to and recommended by friends of our own.

On January 9th we received a telephone message from the Admiralty asking if we could be ready to start on the 16th. Impelled by faith and hope we boldly answered "yes," though at that time we had not received any promise of help from the Serbian Relief Fund, and our assets stood only at £150, while the hospital equipment was still nebulous!

The financial responsibility, therefore, at this time rested almost entirely upon ourselves.

However, matters advanced rapidly. We formed a small committee* of friends and supporters to carry on in England the work of collecting funds and dispatching stores. Mr. Reginald Garratt, Secretary to the Royal Free Hospital, kindly acted as hon. secretary to this committee, a post which entailed on him and his office staff an enormous amount of labour, both before and after our departure.

We wished to be called the Royal Free Hospital Serbian Unit, but the hospital board—though they bestowed their blessing, and several members gave also more substantial donations—would not allow the poor infant to bear the hospital name. Perhaps they feared it would disgrace its parent in barbarous Serbia, perhaps they had visions of being called upon to pay a ransom to redeem it from the clutches of the enemy. So it received the colourless title of Anglo-Serbian Hospital, a name shed in Serbia, where it was universally known as the “Berry Mission,” while in England, in spite of its god-parents, it was more often called the “Royal Free Hospital Unit.” The Royal Free Hospital was certainly the London home of the Unit. In the great central hall of the newly-built out-patient department—now a ward for officers—our stores were received, to be labelled and dispatched. As the date of departure approached the hall contained an imposing collection of packing-

* The committee consisted of the following:—George Hubbard, Esq., F.R.I.B.A. (Chairman), Rt. Hon. W. H. Dickinson, M.P. (Treasurer), Sir F. Layland Barratt, Bart., M.P. (later, Chairman), Mrs. Joseph Cuning, Sir Arthur Evans, K.C.B., P.S.A., Haden Guest, Esq., Mrs. W. H. Hilton, Cecil Joll, Esq., F.R.C.S., Miss Zillah Tuck, and Reginald R. Garratt, Esq., Hon. Secretary.

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cases, bales, and crates. The seventy-two beds, tied together in bundles of four, hardly looked as if they would arrive in Serbia intact, but, as it turned out, scarcely one was broken. In side rooms parcels containing contributions from friends were received ; unpacking and repacking of these revealed a most heterogeneous collection of things, and made great claims on the time and labour of indefatigable members of the nursing and secretarial staffs.

On January 19th, three days later than expected, we embarked from Avonmouth on the Admiralty transport SS. *Dilwara*.

The incidents of the journey may be passed over rapidly. The Bay was rough and the *Dilwara* rolled, but the members of the Unit were keen on preparing for the work before them, and those who could hold up their heads on deck gathered together daily to learn the rudiments of Serbian from Mr. Berry—the Professor as we shall often term him in this book, that being the title by which he was usually known in Serbia, from his position in connection with the University of London, and from his having held a Professorship in the Royal College of Surgeons.

Malta afforded a pleasant stay of two days. Our further journey was arranged for by the Admiralty on the Messageries boat *Caledonien*. We left Malta on a beautiful evening, and while sitting on deck watching the moonlit sea and sky, we had our first introduction to the banjo and the inimitable songs of Mr. Gordon (the Herr Ingenieur as he was usually called in our Serbian hospital), which during so many months were to be such an antidote to depression and influence for sociability in the Unit, as well as

such an unfailing attraction to lay before our Serbian visitors.

Alas! the *Caledonien* soon showed that she could roll as well as the *Dikwara*, and in the narrow channel of the Doro such bad weather was encountered that the boat actually turned back and spent several hours steaming up and down in a more or less sheltered bay, thus prolonging by another twenty-four hours the pleasures of the voyage.

Salonica, however, was reached in sunshine, and its beautiful harbour and picturesque streets delighted the Unit. Two and a half days were required to tranship the stores from the lighters, on which they were taken off the ship to the train. On the same boat had come, under the charge of our friend Mr. Weigall, the stores belonging to the British Red Cross Mission under Captain Bennett, who with his staff was being transported on Sir Thomas Lipton's yacht the *Erin*. There were also packing cases addressed to Lady Paget's Hospital at Skoplje and to the Serbian Red Cross Society at Nish. To ensure that each packing-case went into the right railway van required constant supervision from one or more responsible members of the Unit.

At Salonica we heard from the Serbian Consul-General, Mr. Vintrovitch, that our destination was to be Vrnjatchka Banja, and Mr. Weigall was informed that the British Red Cross Unit was to go to Kragujevatz. Before we left, however, another order arrived, saying the destination of the latter unit had been changed, and they also were to be located at Vrnjatchka Banja.*

* Before we left London it had been suggested to us that it would be a good plan if both units could be sent to work in the same place. Con-

On February 9th our party left Salonica, their number augmented by the addition of the five members from Paris, who had travelled thence *via* Italy, and had arrived at Salonica the day before (see Chap. VI.). We took with us candles and food for the journey, as we knew the trains would not be lighted and no food would be obtainable on the way.

A journey of about three hours through rather dull scenery brought us to Ghevgeli, on the Serbian frontier. Here, near the station, were to be seen the hospital buildings of the American Mission, which was waging a terrible fight against typhus. The enormous numbers they had to deal with made it impossible to secure proper conditions for the satisfactory treatment of the sick or the safety of the staff. Some of the doctors and nurses met us at the station; they had already two members of their staff down with typhus and seemed very depressed and overworked.

At Ghevgeli we were transferred into a Serbian train. The line led through magnificent mountain scenery; at times we crawled over bridges which had been temporarily repaired in consequence of a recent Bulgarian raid. At Skoplje (Uskub), where we arrived in the evening, Lady Paget met us on the platform, and from her too we learnt of the rapid increase of typhus in the country, and of the precautions they were taking against it. Nish was reached next morning. Here we were met by M. Slavko Grouitch, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Colonel Soubotitch, Vice-President of the Serbian

sequently, from Malta we dispatched to Nish a letter to this effect, and we were afterwards told that a similar letter had been received from the other unit. Hence the change in the destination of the latter.

Red Cross Society. We were most hospitably entertained at Nish, and met many prominent Serbians engaged in Red Cross and other work, and also some of the English already working in the country. We visited the offices of the Serbian Red Cross, saw the President of the Society Colonel Karanovitch, and were informed that we were to be attached to the Reserve Military Hospital of Vrnjatchka Banja and that, like other foreign missions in Northern Serbia, we should work under the direct orders of the military authorities, whose headquarters were at Kragujevatz. The missions in Southern Serbia were under different control. We also heard that we were to be located in a very spacious building at Vrnjatchka Banja, which was very satisfactory news.

We left Nish in the evening, had to transfer ourselves and our stores at Krushevatz during the small hours of the morning in pitch darkness into a narrow-gauge train, and when daylight appeared found ourselves travelling up a valley, the beautiful hills on either side of which were partially capped with snow. We reached the station of Vrnjatchka Banja before we were expected, and there was no one to meet us. We adjourned to a modest café close by, while the stationmaster had recourse to the telephone. Just as some of the party were starting to walk, a collection of carriages drove up. In the leading one was Colonel Sondermeyer, one of the heads of the Army Medical Department, with two gentlemen of whom we were to see much in the future, Major Gashitch and Mr. Neuhut. They assured the intending walkers that the mud was so bad that walking would be impossible. This sounded absurd to English ears,

but subsequent acquaintance with Serbian mud in general and with this road in particular, made us see that the description was justified.

Luggage and stores were left behind at the station, and the procession of carriages, headed by a big wagonette driven by an Austrian prisoner, with which we afterwards became very familiar, conveyed the Unit over the two miles which separate the station from Vrnjatchka Banja.

F. M. D. B.

CHAPTER III.

VRNJATCHKA BANJA : PREPARATION OF HOSPITALS.

Description of Vrnjatchka Banja—The "Terapia"—Unpacking Stores—Supplies in Serbia—Our Unit Self-contained—Ventilation—Disinfection—Sulphurisation—Boilers—Destructors for Burning Refuse—Flies—Water Supply—The School.

VRNJATCHKA BANJA* a watering-place with warm sulphur springs, is one of the most fashionable and important health resorts in Serbia. It possesses one long, straggling street, with villa boarding-houses and small shops on one side, while the other side is mostly open to the so-called "park," where gravel paths wind among grassy plots interspersed with groups of trees and a few flower-beds. Through the park runs a canalised stream crossed by numerous wooden bridges. Dotted about in the park itself and on the slopes of the hills around are numerous villas, some of them private dwellings, but the majority of the nature of boarding-houses. One of the best of these was the Villa Agnes, where, we were informed, seven or eight of the Unit were to be housed until permanent accommodation could be found. It was proposed that the rest of the party should sleep in the "Drzhavna Kafana," (National

* The name of our village or little town is Vrn̄tse. As Serbian proper names are always declined, the baths of Vrn̄tse are Vrnjatchka Banja ; just as one might speak of Harrogate and "Harrogatian" baths, if a similar practice prevailed here. Another, and formerly better known, place in Serbia, much further south, is Vranje ; this also has baths, called Vranshka Banja.

There was much confusion of all these names by members of the English missions in Serbia.

or "State" Coffee-house), a large restaurant which had been used as a hospital, but was now empty (Fig. 1). Shortly after our arrival we were taken to see several empty villas and told we might select any which suited us for hospitals and dwelling-house. Several were good houses, but all had only small rooms, which we felt would make nursing difficult and require a larger staff than we possessed. Where, we asked, was the palatial residence we had been told to expect? At last we learnt that there was a hydropathic establishment outside the town, which was said to be in bad repair. We went there in the afternoon, and found a building which, though by no means ideal for a surgical hospital was nevertheless better than any we had yet seen, and possessed a large hall in the form of a dining saloon. The "Drzhavna" had, it is true, an even larger room, but this place when we first saw it appeared so dark, grimy, and generally insanitary, that it was doubtful whether it would ever be possible to convert it into a satisfactory hospital. We decided, therefore, to take the hydropathic, the "Terapia" (Fig. 2) as it was called, as our principal hospital, and chose as a second one the then disused village school, a brick building which stood on the hill opposite, about 300 yards away. The Terapia was to be our dwelling-house, and so uninviting and even dangerous did the Drzhavna appear for a night's stay, that it was decided that those of the party who were to have slept there should come and "camp out" in the Terapia that very night. Next day we started vigorously on the work of converting the latter place into our hospital and home.

The Terapia was an imposing grey stone building adorned with several balconies. It stood near the foot of the lower slopes of the great mountain range of Gotch, facing north and overlooking a marsh. Behind the house the hill rose steeply and was covered sparsely with trees. The chief attraction of the building, from the hospital point of view, was the great dining-hall, which we saw at once would form an excellent ward. This was a long room with concrete floor and large windows on either side ; it ran at right angles to the main building, being connected by an ante-room with the centre of the first floor corridor and opening at the other end by wide doors straight on to the hillside (Fig. 3).

The ground floor of the main block possessed at either end a large square room with a bathroom fitted with an ordinary bath opening out of it. These rooms had concrete floors, with gratings for drainage ; they contained when we came various portable baths—electrical, douche, etc., most of which we removed. The large room on one side was turned into a receiving room ; it was arranged that patients should be brought in through one of the windows and washed in the adjoining bathroom. The corresponding bathroom on the other side was converted into the operating theatre, and the large adjoining room was used for sterilising, washing, keeping instruments, etc., and occasionally, when a chaplain visited us, it became the chapel. Between these two ends of the building ran a passage out of which opened on one side five good bathrooms, and on the other several small rooms, one of which became the X-ray room ; one was used for sulphurisation of

clothes and another for storing lamps and oil. There were also many quaint little cubicles evidently intended for bathers to undress in, which came in most conveniently for storing dressings and other articles.

A fine stone staircase led to the centre of a long corridor running the whole length of the first floor; out of this opened twelve small rooms. Those on one side were kept for patients, three or four beds being put in each, and they were occupied at different times by typhus patients, Serbian officers, women, or merely overflow patients from the big ward.

The rooms on the other side were used, one as a common room for the staff, some as storerooms for linen, soap, pots, underclothes for distribution, etc., presided over by Mrs. Eldred, and in one Dr. Chick and Miss Parkinson established an admirable little dispensary and pathological laboratory.

The second floor was similar to the first in its corridor, and in number and size of rooms, but over the big ward there was nothing, and in the place of the ward ante-room was a shed-like attic which was turned into a carpenter's shop, first managed by Gordon and Norris and afterwards by Blease and Jones. The other rooms were all used as bedrooms for the staff. In these rooms the very elegant furniture belonging to the company owning the place was left for our use; from the rest of the building it was all cleared out and stored away, but pieces of it used to appear in other villas whenever a royal or distinguished guest had to be accommodated, and it thus gradually became scattered all over Vrnjatchka Banja.

Owing to the present and previous wars, the

company which owned the Terapia had not flourished and the building had been long uninhabited. A pipe had burst, and had apparently long remained in the same condition, as the water had soaked deeply into the wall, forming a dark stain over a large part of the outside wall, and the partition walls of three bedrooms were similarly decorated. The architect of the building evidently regarded the sun as an enemy to be kept away, and the house was so arranged that the minimum of sunlight should find entrance. The marsh in front assisted in the resulting chilliness and provided nightly a full orchestra of vociferous frogs. Only a few of the smaller rooms faced south, and for half of these the sunshine was partly cut off by a block parallel to the main building which opened from one side of the further end of the ward. Here on the ground floor of the block was the hospital kitchen, with an adjoining dayroom for the orderlies; on the next floor was our own kitchen, in which was placed the stove we had brought out, and adjacent to the kitchen was the staff dining-room. In the storey above were small rooms (one of which was kept locked by the Terapia Company), and the others were used as bedrooms by the Austrian orderlies.

Underneath the big hall were the things which together formed the pride of the Terapia and excited the envy of all our visitors, Serb and British alike. These were the steam laundry, the electric light plant, the central heating apparatus, the boilers for the baths, and the engines which furnished the power for the rest. All this machinery was imposing and suggested luxury. But in fact it was not in very

good order ; it required constant supervision and repair, and when fuel failed, or engines broke down, as they often did, our palatial residence became very uncomfortable. We had not at this time the host of Austrian prisoners who afterwards did most of our heavy work. The whole of the unpacking of the stores and preparation of the Terapia and school was done by the members of the Unit themselves. But the engines and machinery were fortunately in the hands of skilled workmen from the first. When we took over the Terapia from the company to which it belonged we found already installed in it three Austrian prisoners, who remained with us until the following November, and rendered invaluable service. Two of these, Adolf Riedl and Stefan Szilagyi, worked in what we always called, in German fashion, "the machine-house."

As the Terapia had not only hot and cold water, but also central heating, electric light, up-to-date lavatories, and a steam-laundry, it was as good a hospital building as could be found in Serbia, outside Belgrade itself.

Our stores, in the shape of 390 bales and packing cases, were brought up from the station in ox wagons and piled up in the large hall, where for several days all the members of the Unit worked hard, unpacking, distributing, and adapting the various contents. Some of these proceedings are described in Chapter VI.

With regard to medical stores and such things as bedsteads, bedding, and hospital linen, conditions were very different in the various foreign units which came to Serbia. Most of the British units, like our own, were self-contained and did not need to

draw to any large extent upon the Serbs for equipment. But some of the foreign units, such as the Greek mission at Vrnitse, had brought but little with them except surgical instruments, and these were naturally wholly dependent upon the Serbs for the rest of their equipment. It was largely the rich supply of medicaments and other hospital stores that the British missions brought with them to the impoverished country that made their help so valuable to Serbia, and for this the Serbs have always been profuse in their expressions of gratitude. At the time of our arrival in Serbia, or soon afterwards, the storerooms of the Serbian Red Cross Society were almost wholly depleted, their funds were practically exhausted (indeed it was said that the Society was at that time actually in debt), and it was practically impossible to obtain the articles of which the country was urgently in need. It was the lack of sufficient underclothing, for instance, which made it impossible to treat typhus on rational lines. "What Serbia most needs," said a prominent Serb official to one of us during the typhus epidemic, "is a million shirts"; and there was much wisdom in his remark. We seldom visited the Red Cross stores at Nish without bringing away something that was useful for our hospitals. The Red Cross officials supplied our wants freely as far as they were able, but unfortunately their power to do so fell far short of their willingness. For the first few months we were entirely dependent, except for beds, upon the stores which we had brought from home.

We were all great believers in ventilation, and we also believed that human nature being what it is,

if a window *can* be shut it *will* be shut ; consequently one large window at the end of the ward was fixed in a sloping position, while some of the upper panes from windows on both side walls were remorselessly removed and replaced by planks at an angle of 45° , so as to direct the incoming air towards the ceiling. By this means the ward, even when full of suppurating wounds, remained surprisingly sweet. We had been told by Serbs that it would be impossible to have open windows in a Serbian hospital : they prophesied that all sorts of calamities would follow the execution of such revolutionary proceedings ; the patients would not like us, they would refuse to stay in the hospital, and so on. As a matter of fact the patients accepted the open windows with remarkable docility even when we had severe weather, and when the central heating apparatus would not work—two conditions which generally happened to occur simultaneously. Sometimes, when the ward was crowded, the sisters and orderlies had difficulty in finding places for all the beds on the windward side where the patients would not be snowed on during a blizzard ; but even in these conditions the patients generally remained cheerful ! The seventy-two portable stretcher beds, which had happily arrived in good condition, were placed in the main ward, and also in the smaller rooms destined for patients. In the school, which was being simultaneously got ready, we placed iron bedsteads, which were requisitioned from villas in the neighbourhood.

The disinfection of clothing, blankets, mattresses, etc., was an important matter which early engaged

our attention. At first we tried sulphurisation. A small room in the basement of the Terapia was hermetically sealed by pasting newspaper over all cracks and crevices. Poles were placed across the room, and upon these were hung the various articles to be disinfected. Lump sulphur upon an iron tray in the middle of the floor was then ignited and the room left closed for twenty-four hours. This method, when carefully carried out, proved perfectly satisfactory as regards the destruction of all living lice. When the room was subsequently opened and the garments examined, hundreds of dead lice could be shaken out, especially from the socks and undergarments. For the successful application of this method, it is essential that the room be hermetically sealed, and that a sufficiency of sulphur be employed (three-quarters of a pound to each thousand cubic feet of air space) so that all the oxygen may be transformed into sulphur dioxide; it is important also that the bundles of clothing be opened out so that the sulphurous gas can obtain free access to all parts. When, as occasionally happened, carelessness led to a neglect of these precautions, some lice were found to survive. But sulphurisation, in any case, did not destroy the nits, and after a time we gradually came to use this method chiefly for articles, such as boots, which could not be boiled.

But to boil a large mass of clothes and blankets was a difficulty; we had no large tanks in which the boiling could be effected, and none were obtainable either in Vrnitse or in Nish. The local tinsmith was therefore summoned, galvanised iron sheets were bought at the neighbouring little town of Trstenik,



FIG. 3.—MAIN WARD IN THE TERAPIA.



FIG. 4.—CONVALESCENT PATIENTS AT THE SCHOOL HOSPITAL, DANCING THE KOLA.

and in a few days we were in possession of five large circular metal tanks, each about a yard wide, and a yard high, at a cost of fifty dinars (francs) apiece. Wooden lids were made for them by our Austrian prisoner carpenters. Two of these tanks we handed on to the British Red Cross unit. The others we mounted on brick furnaces built by our orderlies, English or Austrian, and from that time onwards clothes, linen, blankets, uniforms, and everything else that would stand the process were disinfected by thorough boiling* (Fig. 5). It was surprising how little an Austrian uniform was damaged by a good boiling; and even blankets, although somewhat hardened by the process, were afterwards still quite serviceable. Anything was better than harbouring infected lice.

Until the Austrian prisoners came the work was done mainly by Mr. Howard. Afterwards each boiler was placed in charge of an Austrian prisoner told off for the purpose, who soon managed his duty most efficiently. Mattresses, or rather the "straw sacks" which we used in place of mattresses, were disinfected by the simple process of burning the hay with which they were stuffed, and boiling the empty sacks.

Two things had to be provided for each of our hospitals. The first was the boiler just described, and the second a refuse destructor. The destructors were only brought to perfection after several experiments. Our first attempt at the Terapia was at

* In the autumn we received from England a "Thresh" steam disinfecter, but for the first few months we were entirely dependent upon these improvised boilers.

making one of the army pattern, a shallow pit lined with stones, which rise in a cone in the middle. In theory this is at once cheap and effective, but we found that our hospitals did not furnish a sufficiently large supply of combustible material to keep the fire going. If the fire once abates in a destructor of this type, the draught up the sides of the middle cone is diminished and the fire eventually goes out. We wanted something smaller with a high chimney. Howard therefore devised a picturesque structure, which for several months defied all the laws of stability as successfully as the Austrian Empire itself. It was built of unmortared bricks, and a sinuous double chimney, made of drain pipes, provided the necessary draught. It was not until the autumn that this was replaced by another, built by Pokorny, our Austrian mason, which carried out the same principles of combustion and at the same time took more account of those of architecture. Pokorny had previously built destructors for our other hospitals (Figs. 5 and 6). His type included a base, in which a wood fire could be lit, and a refuse chamber, floored with iron bars and communicating with a brick chimney at the back. An iron stove-pipe crowned the whole. This destructor was a great success; once lit it burnt continuously, and a very small fire underneath would set it at work.

A point to which from the beginning we attached considerable importance was the removal and destruction, by burning or burial, of all manure or decaying vegetable material from the grounds of the hospital and from the neighbouring roads. It is in such places that flies breed, and the precautions

taken accounted for the comparative immunity of most of our hospitals from these pests.

Perhaps the most important consideration in the establishment of a hospital is the provision of a good water supply. At Vrnjatchka Banja we were exceptionally fortunate in this respect. A public supply of water of excellent quality had been brought a few years before from a point about five miles away in the mountains behind us. Almost the first thing we did after our arrival was to dispatch a small party under Dr. Williams to inspect the intake of this water supply and to examine the course of the channel by which the water came to Vrnjate. Dr. Williams who had been accompanied also by the town engineer, Mr. M——, reported that the springs from which the water came were in a remote part of the mountains far from any habitations or cultivated soil, that there was a good covered reservoir at the intake, and that the water was brought down in an underground channel. Both source and channel were free from liability to pollution, and the water might therefore be drunk with impunity. Until this fact had been established we had drunk no water which had not previously been boiled. Now we were free to drink the water which was obtainable at fountains in various parts of the town. The fountain nearest to our main hospital was distant about 400 yards, lying behind the school and close to the Villas Shumadia and Zlatibor, afterwards chosen by the British Red Cross unit for their dwelling-house and main hospital. For more than two months all our drinking water at the Terapia was brought in buckets from this fountain. But immediately

after receiving Dr. Williams' report we applied, through Mr. Neuhut, to the Serbian Government, asking that the town supply might be laid on to the Terapia itself and the other hospital buildings. To obviate the long delay which in Serbia generally precedes the granting of such requests, we offered to contribute a sum of money, not exceeding £50, towards the expenses of laying pipes, etc. This arrangement was made before Captain Bennett's unit had arrived; when he learnt what had been done, he kindly agreed to share in the guarantee. In the end, however, neither of us was called upon to pay anything. The pipes duly arrived from Belgrade, and after considerable pressure had been applied to the town engineer, he set a gang of Austrian prisoners to dig the necessary trenches and complete the work.

By the middle of April water had been laid on to the Terapia, the School, and the Villa Zlatibor. A stand pipe was also erected, for the convenience of the general public, by the side of the high road not far from the Terapia. As the other hospitals, which we subsequently established, were in close proximity to the public sources of water supply in the town, all our hospitals were thus eventually supplied with an abundance of good water. The Berkfeldt filters that we had brought with us from England were therefore never used, and the elaborate plans for the purification of drinking water, which we had intended to adopt if necessary, also fortunately never required to be put into execution.

By February 19th, our main hospital, the Terapia, was ready for the reception of patients, and we duly notified the military authorities to this effect.

The school was also ready very shortly afterwards. This building consisted of three class rooms, which we turned into excellent wards. There was also a small kitchen, and two rooms where the schoolmaster formerly resided. One of these became a bedroom for Mr. Gwin, in whose charge the school remained during the whole of his stay with the mission, and the other was used as a dressing room for patients. The school was intended only for patients who could walk and would require little nursing, and it proved a very useful convalescent home for the Terapia (Fig. 4). These two hospitals, Terapia and School, gave us an aggregate of one hundred beds. On February 21st, two days after they were made ready, the first batch of patients, twenty-three in number, was received at the Terapia. They were nearly all cases of old compound fracture and other severe bone injuries, transferred from the Serb and Greek hospitals in the town. They were brought into the receiving room on the ground floor, and before being taken up to the ward each patient was shaved and washed thoroughly, in the manner that will be described later.

J. B.

CHAPTER IV.

FEBRUARY, 1915.

A Journey to Nish—Engineer and the New Railway—Stalatch—First Conference at Nish—Terrible State of Serbia—Overcrowding and Typhus Fever—Memorandum sent to England—Scarcity of Doctors—Mortality Statistics—Previous Balkan Wars—Vrntse after Battle of Chachak—Conditions at Vrntse—Spread of Typhus—Greek and Serbian Hospitals—Typhus Baraques—Conference with British Red Cross Unit—Clearing-house System—Bath-house—The Drzhavna—First Patients Arrive—Methods of Transport—The Serbs as Patients.

ON February 19th, the day on which our main hospital was ready for the reception of patients, a summons was received from Nish to attend a meeting of representatives from the various British hospital units then in Serbia, to be held at the British Minister's. Accordingly on the following day Mr. Berry and Dr. Howell, the senior medical officer of the British Red Cross Society's unit, which had arrived at Vrnjatchka Banja four days after ourselves, set off by train to attend the meeting. Travelling by train at that time was by no means pleasant. It was generally recognised that the railway carriages were a fertile source of infection from typhus, and consequently they reeked of disinfectants. A pleasant travelling companion was found in the person of the chief engineer to the line, who told us about the projected new railway that was being constructed from Kragujevatz *via* Kraljevo and the Ibar valley to Mitrovitsa, where it would join the existing line running north from Skoplje (Uskub). The con-

struction was in the hands of a Franco-Serbian company, and it was expected that it would take at least four years to complete. Such a line would obviously be of great advantage to Serbia, especially from a military point of view, as it would give an alternative route from Belgrade (or rather from the junction of Lapovo) in the north to Skoplje in the south. At present Serbia has only one railway, and that a single line, running right through the country from north to south. But very little had been done as yet towards the construction of the new line beyond preliminary surveys and the collection of material. The outbreak of war had of course put a stop to all work, and some of the derelict material was subsequently of use to us, as will be told hereafter (see Chap. XI.).

A seven hours' wait at the junction of Stalatch was spent at the neighbouring inn, where we managed to secure a good supper. The place was very dirty, and the main room (in which we did not stay) was crowded with nearly a hundred weary, unwashed, and verminous soldiers, many of whom looked extremely ill. They were lying about all over the place—on tables, chairs and floors, and it was with difficulty that we could thread our way across them. All windows were, as usual, tightly closed, and the atmosphere was stifling. It was obvious enough from this room alone how typhus spread in Serbia. At 3 A.M. we resumed our journey and reached Nish some three hours later.

At the medical conference held that afternoon similar pathetic tales came from all who were in attendance. Existing hospitals everywhere were

said to be over-full and under-staffed ; typhus, typhoid, small-pox, and other infectious diseases were present everywhere in the country and apparently rapidly on the increase ; shortage of doctors and nurses in most places ; disinfectants and many other drugs difficult to obtain ; linen of all kinds, either in rolls or made up into garments, was urgently required, as the spread of typhus was largely due to the inability to provide the verminous patients with clean undergarments.

It was clear that very valuable work had been done by those foreign doctors and nurses who had been in the country since the early days of the war, under conditions of great difficulty and much personal danger. But the efforts of many of them were much hampered by the lack of funds and of sanitary material. All the doctors at the meeting felt strongly that they had not sufficient means for dealing with the insanitary conditions, which were largely due to overcrowding and imperfect means of washing and disinfecting.

At the request of the conference a memorandum embodying the above facts and asking for further assistance was drawn up by Dr. Howard Barrie, of Skoplje, and Mr. Berry, and signed by them and the other medical members of the conference.* It was then forwarded to England with an explanatory letter requesting that it should be shown to the authorities of the Serbian Relief Fund and the

* Mr. J. T. Morrison, F.R.C.S., Surgeon-in-Chief of the Serbian Relief Fund Hospital at Skoplje, who was unfortunately unable to be present at the conference, was shown a copy of the memorandum a few days later and wrote that he was "in full agreement with all the statements and recommendations, and would especially urge the prime importance of (a) temporary buildings, and (b) underclothing."

British Red Cross Society. There is good reason to believe that this memorandum contributed materially to stimulate the flow of money, material, doctors and nurses, which had already begun, and which was subsequently poured by a generous British public into the unhappy land.

Our return journey was made with Captain Bennett and Mr. Karslake, who kindly gave us seats in the luxurious motor car which the latter had brought out from England for the use of the British Red Cross unit.

We thus made the acquaintance of the beautiful mountain road *via* Djunis and Krushevatz, and were enabled to avoid the intensely disagreeable railway journey which would otherwise have been our fate.

At the time of our arrival in Northern Serbia active hostilities were in abeyance. After the great Serbian victories of two months before, which had ended in the triumphant rout of the Austrian invaders, the country had been flooded with large numbers of wounded and sick, both Serb and Austrian. For these the existing hospital accommodation was wholly inadequate. All the buildings which had been pressed into the service were hopelessly overcrowded and miserably understaffed as regards doctors and nurses.* In previous Balkan wars Austria, Russia, and other foreign countries had been of great use, sending well-equipped medical units to supplement

* The following interesting figures were kindly supplied to me from official sources by Colonel Karanovitch, the President of the Serbian Red Cross Society :—

In the war against the Turks (1912-13) there were 303 doctors, 80 students, and 13 other assistants. As the army then numbered 356,000 soldiers, there was one doctor to rather more than a thousand soldiers. In the present war, Serbia, with greatly expanded territory, was able to put 400,000 soldiers into the field and had, at the beginning, 387 doctors (all Serbian) and 203 students and helpers. Up to date (May 22nd, 1915,

the work of the Serbian Army Medical Service. But most of these nations now had their own affairs to attend to, and but little help could be spared for Serbia. Austria in particular was an enemy and fighting on the other side ; the only Austrian doctors now helping Serbia were those who had been taken prisoners. Many of these rendered invaluable aid to the Serbs, many, alas, gave up their lives while so doing. Some 60,000 or 70,000 Austrian prisoners, wounded or unwounded, were already in the country. The consequent overcrowding, dirt, and neglect, in the cold of a Balkan winter, not unnaturally led to an outbreak of typhus fever.

Typhus* had occurred in the previous Balkan war, two years before, but had never then attained anything like the proportions which it now assumed. Whether or not on this occasion it was originally introduced by Austrian prisoners, as was commonly asserted, there can be no doubt that its widespread occurrence throughout Serbia was due to the soldiers, both wounded and unwounded, Serb and Austrian, who

when the typhus epidemic had practically ceased) 93 had died, as follows :—Killed in battle, 1 ; died from non-infectious diseases, 6 ; from typhus exanthematicus, 82 ; recurrent fever, 2 ; typhoid (typhus abdominalis), 2. Besides the above, no less than 35 foreign doctors had also died, mostly of typhus and typhoid ; among them were six Austrian prisoners. Of the English, only two had died, of typhus and of dysentery respectively. Of American doctors, four died of typhus, including one who committed suicide in delirium. Two Belgian doctors and one Egyptian died. A very striking contrast is afforded by the figures of the previous (Turkish) war, in which *only two doctors lost their lives*, one Serb and one Greek.

* It should be remembered that in Serbia and throughout the Germanic countries in general the term "typhus" is applied indiscriminately to the two fevers which we call typhus and typhoid (or enteric), just as was the case in England half a century ago. To distinguish them the former is known as typhus *exanthematicus*, or Fleck-typhus, the latter as typhus *abdominalis*, but in practice the qualifying adjective is generally omitted. Misunderstandings, sometimes serious, sometimes amusing, are apt to occur among those whose knowledge of German medical terms is imperfect, as was the case with some of the English doctors in Serbia.

were now distributed in hospitals, in other public buildings, and in private houses all over the country.

Vrntse lay some thirty miles from a range of hills near Chachak, on which, during the last invasion, a bloody battle had occurred, when the Austrians had been decisively defeated. After the battle hundreds of wounded were poured into the town. There was no regular hospital in the place, but the principal hotels and boarding-houses were converted into temporary hospitals, and were soon filled to overflowing.

Our energetic Major Gashitch, aided by an elderly Slav, Dr. Ivanishevitch, who had practised for many years in France and had patriotically come to Serbia at the beginning of the war, did what they could, and worked incessantly. Many Serbian ladies, although mostly without training as nurses, also gave their assistance willingly, but when typhus had made its appearance few remained.

But few deaths had occurred in these hospitals until some days before our arrival, when typhus had broken out. The disease had been introduced and disseminated by patients, who were sent into the town in batches at short notice and without any information as to what was the matter with them. Sometimes 100 or 150 were just dumped down in the middle of the night, no inquiry having been made whether they could be accommodated. They had to be squeezed in anyhow, often two in a bed. Many of these brought typhus, either declared or in the incubation stage. Patients and hospitals swarmed with lice, and the disease spread rapidly. We were told that of sixty-eight patients who had recently come to the town, fifty died within a fortnight.

The hospitals were in a most unsatisfactory condition ; there were practically no nurses ; what nursing there was, was done by untrained Austrian prisoners. The windows were always closed, and the heat and stench were almost unbearable. Little or no attempt was made to wash the patients, or to provide them with clean linen. The treatment consisted chiefly in the administration of powders, (antipyrin, salicylates, etc.), by orderlies at frequent intervals. The diet was mainly of bread and thin soup. Under the pillows would be found the remains of the daily rations of bread, and often an accumulation of pills or powders, for they were generally just handed round, the patient being left to take them or not as he felt inclined. There was at this time* no public laundry, and no public disinfection of any kind, and the clothes of the patients were rarely if ever disinfected in the hospitals themselves.

Two of the hospitals, the Sotirovitch, an hotel with a fine dining-room, and the Kruna, another hotel, were under the Greek doctors ; and two villas, the Avala and the Atina, were in the hands of the Serbs. Besides these hospitals there were, outside the town, three portable baraques which had been set up for convalescent officers by the Serbian Red Cross Society during the previous Balkan war. These were now filled with cases of all kinds of infectious disease, mainly typhus. The place was in a dirty and insanitary condition, and the mortality was very high. These baraques were under the charge of a Monte-

* Subsequently Major Gashitch set up a hospital laundry and built a brick dry air disinfecter in the town.

negrin lady medical student, who lived there and worked heroically under Dr. Ivanishevitch.

It was very evident from the state of things in Vrnstse that very favourable conditions existed for the spread of typhus and that, unless some stringent measures were taken, the whole place would be overrun by the epidemic.

The British Red Cross Unit, under their non-medical head, Captain Bennett, had arrived on February 15th, and had taken as their principal hospital a large villa, the Zlatibor. The two missions tried as far as possible to collaborate in their work. On March 1st a conference was held at the Terapia, in which the medical staff of both missions and Captain Bennett took part. At this it was decided, on Dr. Williams' suggestion, to adapt and use one of the hot springs for washing patients and to transform the Drzhavna Kafana, which stood close by, into a receiving or clearing hospital. It was intended that as far as possible all patients arriving at the town should pass through the portals of our bath, and that they should be kept a few days at the clearing hospital before being passed on to the hospital for which they were intended. By this means it was hoped that all lice would be eliminated. Patients who developed typhus were drafted into the infectious baraquas. It was not practicable to keep patients in the clearing hospital during the whole possible time of incubation, but, even if the patient fell ill of typhus after being sent to another hospital, there was little or no chance of his transmitting the infection, if he were free from lice. It was arranged that the baths and "Drzhavna" should be run jointly by both missions.

Dr. Williams and Dr. Rowlands were to be the medical officers in charge of the "Drzhavna," each taking half the wards, and sisters and V.A.D.'s were to be provided from each mission.

The work of preparing the "Drzhavna" was undertaken at once, everyone in our Unit who could be spared lending a hand. The part of the building already used as a hospital consisted of two wards, one with large windows opening on to the terrace, a fine room easily capable of holding sixty beds, the other a room somewhat dark and less easy to ventilate, in which twenty patients could be accommodated. Besides these there were several other smaller rooms; one of them was used for keeping stores, dressing out-patients, etc., and one was later turned into an operating theatre.

The disinfection of the hospital was carried out in the usual way by sulphurisation; fifteen heaps of sulphur were left burning in various places, looking like so many little volcanoes. Next day a great cleaning of floors, walls, tables, and bedsteads took place, and the whole place was metamorphosed into an airy and attractive hospital, instead of the dark, odoriferous, grimy place it was before. In one respect our cleansing of the "Drzhavna" was incomplete. We never got rid of the fleas. The building was old, and less than half of it was actually under our control. The fleas swarmed in it, and no one could work there without being continually irritated by their bites.

The public bath-house required some adaptation to fit it for the proposed washing of patients. The work of pulling down the existing dressing cubicles and

the erection of a wooden platform is described in Chap. VI.

While the preparation of the "Drzhavna" was still in progress, we heard that another, and this time a large, consignment of wounded was on its way. These were cases of wounds inflicted during the great battles at the end of November and beginning of December, and had been collected from various hospitals in Northern Serbia, chiefly from that of Palanka. Beds were hastily got ready by filling mattress-cases and pillow-cases with hay, but in spite of the efforts of both missions, the complement of blankets remained somewhat short, and some beds lacked pillows, even after all available bags and pillow-cases had been filled. The convoy of wounded, however, did not arrive on the day expected. This was fortunate, for snow fell heavily nearly all day, and it would have been difficult to carry out thoroughly the scheme of washing and disinfection. On the morning of the next day (March 12th) we were informed that they were arriving, and Major Gas-hitch took Mr. Berry to the station. There they saw the ambulance train arrive in charge of a Serbian doctor, one of the many Markovitches with whom we came in contact. The party had been two days on the journey, the whole of the preceding day having been spent at the junction for our branch line. About a dozen ox wagons, as well as some horse-drawn carriages, were already at the station.

Occasionally the methods by which ox wagons and other vehicles were obtained to convey patients from the station were distinctly amusing. If the conveyances provided by the town authorities were

insufficient, carriages or wagons passing along the neighbouring high road were stopped, and the occupants turned out, together with baggage, farm implements or furniture, as the case might be. If objections were raised, a fierce-looking gentleman with a gun strolled up, and the peasants yielded at once. Groups of disconsolate men and women might be seen sitting by the roadside at the station, while their wagons made two or three journeys to the town and back. On one occasion, even the post carriage was pressed into the hospital service. What impressed us most was the readiness with which the Serbs as a rule gave way to demands which in England would have produced a riot. They were a strange mixture of docility and independence.

While the Professor was absent at the station, the other members of the British units were preparing for the reception of the patients, both at the baths and at the hospitals. About two o'clock the horse vehicles arrived bearing wounded, most of whom were able to walk. These were seated on the benches outside in the sun, while they waited their turn to enter (Fig. 7). Here their heads were clipped by the local barber and others.

The ox wagons began to arrive some time after the horse wagons, in a long-drawn-out train, bringing cases mostly recumbent and some looking extremely ill. Twenty-five of the worst cases were sent on at once to the Terapia, where Dr. Chick, with Sister Robertson and English orderlies, was waiting to receive them. The remainder were laid on benches beside the earlier arrivals. Fortunately the day was fine; there was glorious sunshine, though it was freezing in the shade.



FIG. 5.—DISINFECTING APPARATUS AND DESTRUCTOR AT THE DRZHAVNA.

From right to left are seen hot water boiler, destructor, tank for boiling infected clothing, and the Thresh disinfector, received from England in September.



FIG. 6.—AUSTRIAN PRISONER ORDERLIES BUILDING A DESTRUCTOR AT THE SCHOOL.

Inside the bathhouse Dr. Williams and Dr. Rowlands, from the Red Cross, with English and Austrian orderlies from both missions, worked hard all the afternoon. Each patient on entering the bathhouse was stripped and his clothes put into a linen bag to be disinfected. After the removal of clothes and hair with their lice inhabitants, the patient, if able to walk, went down into the water and was well swilled by an orderly. The more severe cases were laid on trestle benches by the side of the water and washed there. After the bath they were dressed in clean pyjamas and carried to the "Drzhavna."

Nearly all the wounded arriving in the town entered the bath before being distributed among the different hospitals. But we could not prevent a certain amount of leakage. A good many patients succeeded in obtaining access directly to the Greek and Serb hospitals. It must be said, however, that the vast majority of those who did come to us thoroughly enjoyed the luxury of the warm bath and submitted cheerfully enough to the thorough scrubbing to which each was subjected. All the staff, men or women, who came into contact with patients before they were washed had to wear a bifurcated garment made in one piece, and tied tightly round ankles, wrists and neck, as a safeguard against lice. High rubber boots were also worn by those who possessed any, and were extremely useful, as the lice were unable to crawl up them. Later on a wooden hut was built beside the bathhouse; here patients were shaved and undressed, and this was a great improvement on the earlier arrangement.

The general opinion of our doctors and nurses

was that the Serbs were very good patients. Some of our sisters, who had nursed soldiers of other nationalities, declared that they preferred the Serbs to all the others. In spite of their independence of character, the soldiers were almost always docile, and they had borne injuries and neglect, as a rule, with patience and fortitude. Occasionally we had cases of childish and malicious complaints against Austrian prisoners. Sometimes a man would howl like a baby when his wound was being dressed ; but a case of this sort, unless he was seriously exhausted by long suffering, could generally be cured by a little playful banter. The most common fault was reluctance to get up and move about when it was desirable that the patient should do so. The men would lie on their beds and refuse to walk, or cling to crutches when they ought to have been putting their weight on their feet. But the majority were courageous enough. When they first came to hospital, most of them had a great dread of anæsthetics, probably well founded upon experience in previous places. Some believed that every period of anæsthesia meant a loss of several years of life, and they would sometimes undergo painful operations without an anæsthetic rather than purchase painlessness at such a cost. On one occasion however the Frau Doktor received a graceful compliment when a patient declared, on recovering from an anæsthetic, "When death comes, I hope it will be like that." Distrust of anæsthetics and reluctance to believe themselves really cured were the only common failings that we discovered in the Serb wounded.

J. B.

CHAPTER V.

TYPHUS AND HOW WE DEALT WITH IT.

The Building of the Baraque—The Contract with Mircha, the Carpenter—Design—Cost—Lice—Cleansing the Patients—Sceptics about Lice—Mingling of Typhus and other Patients—Typhus and Typhoid—Drugs and Nursing—Fleas.

WHILE the events related in the last chapter were still in progress, the British Red Cross Mission proposed to undertake the charge of the baraquues for infectious diseases already mentioned. We suggested that our Unit should co-operate with them in this work, as our staff, both medical and nursing, were anxious for some more typhus work, and we offered to take charge of one of the baraquues. This suggestion, however, was not accepted, as it was considered that the buildings were too small for a joint undertaking and that the double management would be likely to lead to difficulties. Consequently we decided to build a baraque ourselves, where typhus and other diseases could be received, as there was undoubtedly need for greater accommodation for infectious diseases than already existed in the place.

Soon after our arrival, when we found that existing accommodation would not suffice for all the typhus patients with whom we expected we should shortly have to deal, we had applied to the Serbian War Office for plans and estimates for baraquues. These showed that an excellent baraque to hold fifty

patients would cost 10,000 dinars. The town engineer was then approached, but that easy going gentleman was in no hurry to give us an estimate, and the matter was urgent. So Major Gashitch suggested that we should call in the local carpenter, explain to him exactly what we wanted, and ascertain what he could do for us. "You will most likely get from him a building quite good enough for your purpose, and it will probably cost less and be finished in much less time." The carpenter, who lived close by, was immediately sent for and asked how long it would take to build a wooden shed thirty-six metres long and six wide, with a tiled roof, the whole sufficiently strong to resist the violent wind which frequently occurred at Vrn̄tse.

"Between one and two weeks, not more; it depends on the weather," said Mircha cautiously, for there was already a foot of snow on the ground and more might come. "Then prepare detailed estimates and plans and bring them to the Terapia at 9 to-morrow morning."

At the appointed time Mircha, who was evidently very pleased with the prospect of being entrusted with so important a piece of work, produced an elaborate plan and specification: the materials would cost 3,150 dinars (about £100); he himself would require ten dinars a day, and his two Serb assistants three and four dinars respectively. But now he spoke of "two or three" weeks as the time that would be required for the completion of the building. He had to be reminded that, on the previous day, to Major Gashitch, he had said "not more than two weeks." The estimate for material seemed

not unreasonable ; so Mircha was informed that we would pay him 140 dinars for his own labour and that he would get this same sum whether he took a week over the job, or three, four, or more weeks. But if the building were completed within the fortnight, he would get an extra 100 dinars for himself. The worthy man demurred, saying it was not the custom in Serbia to undertake work on such terms. We replied that it was our English custom, and that he could either undertake the work or we would get it done by someone else. We knew enough of Serb workmen to be fully aware that if we paid him by the day it might be many weeks, perhaps months, before we should have our baraque, as Master Mircha would doubtless find half-a-dozen other jobs that he would like to carry on at the same time as our own. Mircha, who was no fool, saw that we were determined. Within a few minutes a formal contract upon the above terms was drawn up and signed by both parties.

Mircha and his two Serbs assistants worked energetically, and were assisted by some Austrian prisoners kindly provided by the town. These latter gradually diminished in number from seven to two, as they sickened with typhus and had to be taken off duty. The snow had to be cleared away and the ground levelled, stout posts being driven in to form a foundation. The floor and walls were built of thick beech planks. In the gable at either end was a large opening about three feet square to permit of thorough ventilation. This was further secured by a space eight inches high which ran all round the building, between the outside wall and the overlapping roof. As

glass was expensive and difficult to obtain, the frames of the doors and windows were fitted with white muslin, which admitted a sufficiency of light (Fig. 8).

A trench ran along the outside of the building to carry off rain water.

The roof was covered with heavy overlapping tiles, which fitted into one another, so that no nails or pegs were required for their support. It was satisfactory to observe that a violent windstorm which occurred a few weeks later and actually blew down a side of a house not far away, left our baraque quite intact, and did not lift even a single tile from the roof.

In exactly fourteen days, on March 29th, our baraque was finished, and if urgent necessity had arisen, could have been utilised at once for the reception of typhus patients. But as a matter of fact we did not find it necessary to open it until several days later, as we were dealing quite satisfactorily with our typhus cases at the Terapia.

The intervening time was utilised in doing a good deal more towards fitting up and adding to the building generally. Two separate latrines on the dry-earth system, for patients and nurses respectively, a shed for washing and disinfecting bedpans and other utensils, and another for storing fuel, together with a mortuary, afterwards used as a storehouse, were built by our energetic and ingenious orderlies, Messrs. Schwind and Howard. A small kitchen, a bathroom, separate rooms for nurses and for an isolation case, together with stoves and trestle beds,*

* These, of which there were fifty, were made by Mircha at a cost of four dinars each.

were also added to the interior of the building. Electric light was subsequently brought from the Terapia and a telephone installed in the nurses' kitchen by the resourceful Scout.*

The usual destructor for refuse and tank for boiling linen were erected in the grounds.

The total cost of the building with all its accessories eventually came to about 5,000 dinars (about £150).

We were told that this building was the first of its kind to be erected in Serbia, and the speed with which it was constructed, with so small a number of workmen, excited much astonishment. In a country where sawn wood is plentiful and cheap, and where Austrian prisoner labour was abundant, similar barques might have been erected in large numbers and the spread of the epidemic materially checked. We afterwards regretted that we had not started to build our baraque much sooner than we did. All patients who entered its portals were stripped, shaved, and treated to a warm bath before being taken to the ward, their clothing being immediately removed in closed sacks for disinfection elsewhere. We believe it to be a fact that outside the bathroom only one louse was ever seen in our baraque.

After a short time we used to offer 100 dinars to any visitor who could discover a louse, but the reward was never claimed!

From the beginning we had recognised that the key of the position as regards the typhus epidemic was the elimination of its carrier the louse. Our main efforts were therefore in this direction. Hence the elaborate precautions as regards washing and

* The nickname by which Norris was generally known.

disinfection which were instituted, first at the Terapia and later at the "Drzhavna" and public bath, as already described. To the loyal co-operation of all our members—doctors, nurses, orderlies and Austrians, who worked energetically in pursuance of the same object—the elimination of the louse, must be attributed the absence of any spread of the epidemic within our hospitals.

At first, besides the thorough cleansing to which all new patients were subjected, we had been content with cutting short the hair of the head and beard. But the keen eyes of our watchful nurses at the Terapia had discovered, in one or two cases, a few days after admission, a louse or two which had hatched out from nits adhering to body hairs. This quickly led to an extension of our hair-removing activities, and we soon adopted the more thorough process of shaving every hair from all parts of the body. Not only were hairs removed from head, face, axilla, and pubes, but those also on the thighs, legs, chest and abdomen. For the benefit of the non-professional reader, it may be well to explain that the body louse, the carrier of typhus, inhabits the under-clothing lying next the skin and crawls upon the surface of the body. The eggs, however, or nits, are laid mostly upon the hairs, to which they are firmly glued, so firmly that mere washing does not necessarily suffice to remove them. The safest way to ensure their removal is to shave away the hairs themselves. As an additional precaution, petroleum and vermijelli were also employed for the destruction of any stray louse that might possibly have escaped attention. But we placed very little reliance upon the

employment of this method when the more efficacious mechanical cleansing could be effected.

Although when we first came to Serbia most of us had had but little practical experience of a disease so rare in England as typhus fever, the recognition of its transmission by means of the body louse was already well established. Our own observations, after a comparatively short time, sufficed to impress upon us the truth of this important fact. It occasionally happened, however, even at a much later period, that we came across doctors (and at least one English doctor, not in our own Unit) who had seen much typhus, and nevertheless still clung to the belief that lice had little or nothing to do with the matter. The retention of this belief is probably due to the great prevalence of lice among soldiers living in the trenches, under conditions in which washing and frequent change of undergarments may be impossible, who nevertheless do not necessarily get typhus. This is because it is not every louse, but only the louse that has become infected from a typhus patient, that acts as a carrier of the disease. Those of our patients who were already infected with typhus before admission, but in whom the disease had not yet had time to declare itself, naturally developed it within a few days of their admission.

Again and again did typhus break out in all our hospitals, among the newly admitted. But, with the exception mentioned below, no case occurred among those who had already been in hospital for a fortnight—that is, long enough to have passed the period of incubation. In other words, no patient with typhus was able to transmit it to any patient in an adjoining

bed, or to any person in attendance. As a concession to popular opinion, and in deference to those who still maintained that typhus may be transmitted through the air, we did always move our typhus patients from the general wards and place them in separate rooms, as soon as the nature of their illness became clearly manifest. Nevertheless, our medical officers soon came to the conclusion that this precaution was really quite unnecessary. As far as any danger of infection was concerned, the typhus cases might just as well have been treated in the general ward. At the Terapia these patients were placed in the small rooms on the lower corridor. On the same corridor, and next to the typhus wards, was the common sitting-room used by all members of the Unit. Yet not one of our Mission ever contracted the disease. Remove the lice and you remove all danger of transmitting typhus. The exception mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph really serves but to emphasise the truth of these statements. On one occasion we were requested to admit to the Villa Merkur six convalescent typhus patients from another hospital. It was understood that their clothes, which were sent with them, had been properly disinfected, but we afterwards found that such was not the case. Lice were thus accidentally introduced, and two of these six patients transmitted the disease to the patient in the next bed.

The very low mortality of typhus fever, when the patients are treated under proper hygienic conditions and completely freed from all lice at the earliest possible moment, contrasts strongly with the terribly high mortality which occurs when the patients are

left in overcrowded and verminous surroundings, as was so often the case in Serbia. This raises the interesting question whether the virus of typhus fever may not be to a certain extent cumulative. Granted that the bite of a single louse may cause typhus, is it possible that the disease thus acquired will be of a milder nature than that which is produced by the bites of scores or hundreds of lice, infecting and re-infecting the patient again and again? We are not prepared to give a definite answer to this question, but are inclined to think, from our own limited observations, that the correct answer may be in the affirmative.

To those of us whose knowledge of true typhus fever before our arrival in Serbia was mainly or solely derived from text-books, it was extremely interesting to observe that in the early stages of the disease it was occasionally difficult to say definitely whether we were dealing with typhus or with an anomalous form of typhoid. In pronounced cases, and when the rash was out, there was of course seldom or never any difficulty in the diagnosis, but in the first few days it was often otherwise.

A Serbian officer in one of our hospitals was considered for several days by the medical officer in charge to be suffering probably from typhoid, but the disease subsequently ran the typical course of typhus. Conversely, another patient whose case had been diagnosed quite correctly by our doctor as "typhoid without diarrhoea," was pronounced by a foreign doctor who had had very wide experience of both diseases to be "probably typhus exanthematicus."

With regard to the treatment of typhus, no drug that we knew of seemed to have any appreciable influence upon the course of the disease. Nor did we hear from any of the many doctors with whom we discussed the subject that there was any such drug. Most had some remedy or other that they recommended, but proof of its efficacy seemed to be wanting. On the other hand, the application of the ordinary general principles of hygiene, diet, and especially nursing, seemed to us to be extremely valuable elements in the treatment. We have but little doubt that many of our patients, some of whom were desperately ill, owed their lives to the devoted nursing of our skilled sisters no less than to the careful watchfulness of our doctors.

In conclusion, it may be repeated with confidence that it was the thorough removal of all lice and nits from the patients that prevented the spread of the disease in our hospitals, and saved them from becoming the horrible pesthouses that we saw and heard of in some other parts of Serbia, where similar measures of cleanliness could not be, or were not, carried out.

We can claim with equal confidence to have proved that the flea does not in Serbia carry typhus. Everyone who worked at the "Drzhavna," by day or by night, was constantly bitten by the fleas which infested that old building, and no one became ill. It is impossible that of these countless bites none should have conveyed infection, if the flea was capable of being a carrier. The case against the flea was never strong, but our experience seems to have demolished it altogether.

J. B.

CHAPTER VI.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE SCOUT.

The "Majestic Five" leave Paris—Journey through Italy—Salonica—Arrival at Vrn̄tse—Unpacking—The Carpenter's Shop—Manual Labour—Visit of the Crown Prince—To "be English"—Electrical Engineering—The Bathhouse—Out-patients—Second Conference at Nish—The Austrian at Krushevatz—British Red Cross Cottage at Stalatch—Fire at the Terapia—"It's an ill Wind," etc.—Excursion to Belgrade—Naval Exploits.

A NOTE ON NORRIS.

On a Sunday evening, the last day of January, 1915, five lusty fellows, resplendent in khaki, left the Hôpital Majestic, Paris, where they had been working since the beginning of the war.

We five, Williams, Schwind, Gwin, Howard, and Norris, nicknamed the "Majestic Five," had heard of the sad plight of Serbia ; and so set forth, each with his kit-bag, looking forward to meeting the Professor in Salonika. What was to be the programme then no one knew exactly, but each of us had the spirit of Caius Ligarius :

"Set on your foot,
And with a heart new-fired I follow you
To do I know not what, but it sufficeth
That Brutus leads me on."

We were a heterogeneous group. Williams was sailing under his true colours as a doctor, and so was I as a medical student ; but Schwind was a hunting squire, who had judged at the Royal Horse Show ; Gwin was a professional singer ; Howard was a

sculptor ; and all three had been entirely innocent of hospital ambitions until the war broke out.

The journey was made through Italy, where there was time to look over Genoa and Florence on the way to the Imperial City. Here we put up at a certain hotel which advertised "Sala da Bagno." This golden hope turned out to be a myth, for, as a matter of fact, there was but one small bath, which one filled with a jug. Our khaki uniform often evoked cheers for Britain among the Romans, although Austrians and Germans were not wanting in the streets.

After leaving Rome we passed through the Abruzzo district, which had just been devastated by earthquake. Scarcely a single permanent building was left standing, whole towns being in ruins. The ground was covered with snow, with here and there a wooden or canvas refuge for the survivors. Behind this desolation rose the white peaks of the Apennines, the whole, illuminated by a brilliant full moon, making up a scene long to be remembered.

As we were leaving Brindisi a hydroplane flew out of the harbour, like a great seagull, passing within a few yards of the boat. Then it settled on the water ahead of us, turned round, and came back, skimming along the surface of the sea at about forty miles an hour, while the man in the passenger's seat waved his hand to us.

The ship passed through the Gulf of Corinth, and so, by way of the canal, to the Piræus, where we had a few hours in which to see Athens.

Next day we arrived in Salonika and met the Professor, with his twenty fellow-workers, and twenty-five tons of stores. Salonika was full of people in

every variety of fantastic costume, some even dressed up as London business men, in stiff white collars and plain black suits ! Others, less ambitious, arrayed themselves in brightly coloured calico ; while here and there was a beggar, hard put to it to stretch his scanty apparel over the verminous wastes.

Two days were spent on the journey to Vrantse. When we arrived in the little village we were shown into a room at a hospital, where some Austrian orderlies—prisoners of war—were told off to attend to our wants, so that for a few hours after arrival we had a *valet de chambre* to assist us to wash, shave, and dress for lunch ! He could not speak a word of anything we understood, but he smiled cheerfully enough, brought along water and towels and soap, and stood by during our ablutions.

He advanced deferentially to wash our shaving brushes, took off our boots for us, and indicated his complete willingness to do anything for our comfort !

The two Austrian engineers at the Terapia had an interesting history. According to the tale current in Vrantse, their Serbian predecessors having gone to the war, the chief engineer—a very capable Serb—set out to the front with but one object, to capture two engineers ; and he went on capturing Austrians and asking them if they were of this profession. Having thus collected two, he brought them back to Vranjatchka Banja and set them to work in the engine-house of the Terapia.

As many excellent surgical instruments are made in Vienna, we thought of sending out our chief engineer to forage for a man to sharpen our scalpels ; telling him if he could bring back a *chef* or two, and, possibly

a family butler, or a landscape gardener, we could fill up a few blanks in our household staff !

The Austrians in our village were very worthy fellows ; it was scarcely possible to carry anything about the streets without inducing a man in slate-blue uniform to step alongside, salute, and relieve one of the burden.

The first few days were spent mainly in unpacking stores, a fairly strenuous business, in which everyone joined. In fact, the keynote of the whole of our work in Serbia was struck during this our first task. We had come to a simple little hillside village, to share in the life of a sturdy, honest race of hard-working peasants ; and many of the conventions of London society were to be swept ruthlessly aside. And so the Professor wielded crowbar and axe with much effect, while surgeons and Austrians staggered away with piles of stores, and sisters and nurses packed away the provisions, scrubbed the floors, and served up steaming hot soup in the kitchen.

When the last packing-case had been emptied, we all set to work to clear up the big dining-hall of the *Terapia*, which was to be our main ward. The ladies sat around making mattresses and stuffing pillows, the place was scoured out with disinfectant, and the stretcher beds were brought in and fitted up. Downstairs we were busy whitewashing the operating theatre and surgical storerooms. Out in the grounds the Austrians stacked up the empty packing-cases, which were soon to be so extensively used in making cupboards, lockers, and all manner of furniture. A consignment of beds for the "School" arrived from the "*Drzhavna*." Each bed was disin-



FIG. 7.—PATIENTS ARRIVING AT THE BATH-HOUSE.



FIG. 8.—OUR TYPHUS BARAQUE



fectured by burning piles of straw under it, to the immense amusement of the village children and to the admiration of the Serbian medical men who were present.

It became the fashion among the village maidens to come along and offer their services, but our Serbian commissaire, or secretary, passed on their names to the local military officials, who drafted them into other hospitals, which was not what they bargained for! All sorts of people strolled into the Terapia to see how we mad English were getting on, and many a wild report was spread about our methods. For example, we had some difficulty in finding a kitchen maid to assist our cook; and it was found that they believed in the village that if we engaged anyone to work in the Terapia, he or she was to be washed in the receiving room by our orderlies before being allowed to commence duty!

One of the busiest departments of the hospital, especially during the early days, was the workshop, fitted up by Gordon and Norris. A very serviceable bench was constructed out of a few planks and the wreckage of some wooden railings; tool-racks and shelves were installed and a window was put in. Even a little metal-work was done at times—as witness the stand for the theatre steriliser, made with aluminium splinting and thick iron wire. The first step in this process was to make a drill to bore rivet-holes in the aluminium. A large bradawl was sacrificed for the purpose, and after being shaped with a file, was hardened with the aid of a “Primus” stove and a basin of water; it worked fairly well. There were no rivets in the stores brought

out from England, but screws cut in halves and split down with a hack-saw served the purpose. The finished article lasted for several months of constant use.

We made a small sledge to carry things across the valley to the convalescent hospital, but it was never used, as the snow had disappeared by the time it was ready. The local gentry were quite unable to understand why we should go in for all this manual labour. "Is that one of your employees?" asked a visitor, indicating Howard laying drain-pipes. "No," said the Professor, "that is one of my colleagues, a gentleman from Paris." "But he is working like a servant! He is digging!" "That is nothing," replied the Professor, with a smile. "You see, we have no servants; all the people here are giving their services freely, and we do whatever work has to be done." And not long afterwards the most distinguished of all our visitors, the Crown Prince, arriving unexpectedly, found our chief bespattered with mud from head to foot, plying his spade with the rest of us, draining a marsh in front of the Terapia! The Prince arrived in a motor car and naturally entered the Terapia without ceremony. The Professor, to whom an unauthorised visitor in his wards was as inflammatory a spectacle as a donkey on her green to Miss Betsy Trotwood, hurried into the building and shouted up the stairs after the intruders, "What do you want?" A scandalised aide-de-camp explained that this was the Crown Prince. The Prince himself was no stickler for etiquette, and after spending some time in the ward, had tea in the kitchen, then the only living-room, with

complete cheerfulness. On this occasion Norris, who was fitting up a water tank at the Baraque, had to pull his shirt-sleeves down hurriedly and put on his tunic and cap, in order to be introduced to the Prince ; while Gwin and Howard had to leave their domestic duties at the school for the same purpose. It became a proverb in the village to " Be English," that is, to stride along in *négligé* attire, with a baulk of timber over one's shoulder, or a pailful of white-wash in one's hand.

On one occasion there arose a dearth of dustpans, and it was found that the small, flat, square, wooden boxes which had contained tins of condensed milk could readily be cut in two with a saw in such a way as to provide two of these useful domestic articles.

Large folding screens were easily made out of beech-wood battens, strengthened by diagonal strands of steel wire and covered with calico.

Odd minutes were spent in the workshop making inkstands and soap dishes, while longer intervals were devoted to the construction of the various splints and extension apparatus required in the treatment of fractures and deformities.

There was also a fair amount of electrical engineering to be done in connection with the electric lighting plant, the motor which pumped water up into the loft, and the X-ray apparatus. This latter gave trouble several times, as the wires and fuses supplying the light in the room were unable to carry the heavy current required in taking skiagrams. Ultimately the difficulty was surmounted by laying a special cable directly from the power-house to the

X-ray room. The accidental breakage of a marble basin provided the material for making a switch-board in the department, while the fragments of a towel rack yielded a sufficient quantity of thick glass rod to make an insulated stand for a part of the apparatus. Perhaps the greatest mechanical triumph in the X-ray room was the repair of a broken guide on the tube-carrier—a process which involved boring two holes, a quarter of an inch wide, through half an inch of cast steel, with an improvised drill, held in a carpenter's brace !

One day the motor in the pump house fused, and our water supply was thereby threatened. We had no insulated wire thick enough to replace the strand which had given way. However, a piece of plain thick copper wire was discovered in a fence near by, and, having been covered with a layer of thin string and some lead plaster from the surgical store, was fitted into the damaged motor, which worked well from that day until the end of our time at the Terapia.

Some weeks after we had settled in Vrnjatchka Banja steps were taken, as already narrated on page 45, to establish a clearing-house system. One fine day, with this end in view, the bath-house was attacked by a small but resolute band, and the poor old man who looked after the place was shocked past all expression by such proceedings. He pulled off his Astrakan cap and passed his withered fingers desperately through his long white hair and flowing beard, utterly bewildered by the sight of us pulling up by the foundations all the rotten old posts and verminous wooden partitions which surrounded the pool of hot sulphur water.

"Cheer up, Tolstoi!" we said; but he shook his head sadly, talked a great deal of Serbian, and finally went off up the road in despair, convinced that we were, one and all, hopelessly and irremediably mad! Then came the work of building a platform a few inches above the water level, where the orderlies could stand and supervise the washing of the patients. Gordon and Norris made some massive trestles with logs brought down from the Gotch forests; and these, fastened together with iron staples, were placed in the big concrete basin, while thick beech boards were shaped roughly with saw and axe and nailed on to the trestles. The work was finished about midnight, by the light of an acetylene lamp, and the two carpenters celebrated the occasion by swimming round the pool while waiting to see whether the structure would float up when the water rose again to its full level. Fortunately, it remained quite firm.

As time went on the work of the hospital became known in the whole district round about Vrnjatchka Banja, and a small out-patient practice was developed, of which more is said in a subsequent chapter. A baby was brought along for club-foot, and a little girl whose knee had become fixed in a bad position as a result of tuberculosis, one or two ophthalmic cases, and so on, came in to be attended by the British doctors.

One day a message arrived from a cottage away over the hills asking that someone might come to see a man who had been taken ill. The matron and Norris set out in answer to this call and arrived at a farm. In a little dark kitchen with an earthen floor they found two patients, the farmer and his son, a boy of fourteen.

Numerous legs of ham were hanging up in the enormous chimney, and the chickens walked about the room, quite unmolested by the three cats which shared the farmer's bed. The old lady was much surprised that no bargaining for fees took place before the patients were examined, and when she was given the medicines for her husband and boy, with no mention of payment, she was quite overcome with gratitude. She walked over to the Terapia next day to bring us five eggs and a basket of apples.

We were cleaning out the Drzhavna Kafana, in preparation for its occupation as a clearing hospital, when Williams struck up a little composition, set to a well-known tune :

"There are no lice on us,
There are no lice on us,
No lice on us!
There may be one or two
Great, big, fat lice on you,
But what we sing is true:
No lice on us!"

At this point there entered a Serbian gentleman, who, recognising the tune, asked, in French, if that was our National Anthem ; and we replied that it was.

Gordon helped Williams for a while with the work at the clearing hospital, and as a result of this experience he concluded that the whole science and art of medicine is summed up in the rule that if the pain is above the eyes, one must give a " sleeper " (a tablet of aspirin) ; if below the eyes, a " shifter " (a tablet of calomel). When Williams went his round each day, Gordon followed him with a bottle of " sleepers " in one hand and one of " shifters " in the other. Very soon, how-

ever, the pharmacy was extended to include a number of "tabloid" preparations, some quinine, and several other useful drugs. Some stock solutions were made up by the dispenser at the Terapia containing much orange peel and a little burnt sugar.

On the last day of March the Professor was invited to attend a second conference of British medical men, to be held at Nish; and Norris went with him. The train was an hour or so late, but nobody worried about a little thing like that. Besides, it gave time to examine the station-master's wife, who was ill. The station-master telephoned to Nish, so he told us, asking to have rooms prepared for us in the town.

The train was crowded with soldiers returning from the front, so we got into the mail-van—a compartment some ten feet by seven—and made ourselves comfortable. It is wonderful what a fine couch one can make out of piles of letters and parcels, which were strewn thickly over the floor. Our average velocity was six miles per hour, as we reached Krushevat, twenty-four miles away, in four hours. Shortly before leaving the latter station we were aroused by a cheery greeting, "Hullo! Good-evening, gents!" from an extraordinarily grimy individual who thrust into the narrow doorway a half-shaved chin and a pair of ferret eyes, hung about with verminous fringes of tousled hair, surmounted by a tattered Austrian cap. "Hullo!" he said again. "Where are you going? Glad to see you!" and he proffered a greasy hand, which we seized and shook enthusiastically. Whereupon he climbed into our mail-van, giving us glimpses of a coat consisting chiefly of holes, having no front aspect, while below were seen the more durable frag-

ments of a pair of trousers. At the same time the atmosphere acquired a perfume rich and rare, reminding us of many things. "Well, old friend," we said, cordially; "it's very pleasant to hear a Christian language again. Tell us all about it. Where did you pick up your English, which you talk so well?" "In London," he replied. "My home is in Canning Town, where I have been a journalist for twelve years. Now, since seven months, I am a prisoner of war." "Well, that's rotten luck, isn't it? How are you getting on here?" "Oh, not so bad. I am quite well and strong. There were a hundred of us Austrians sent here from Nish, but twenty-eight have died of typhus, and all the rest are ill but myself and four others. We live together in a wagon down there in the railway yard. Oh, we are warm and comfortable, we five, I tell you, gents! I built up a stove, and my friend makes us beds and curtains to keep out the wind. Well, the train is going on. I thank you for your kindness, and I hope to see you in London when I come home, some day." More hand-shaking, and then he sprang out into the night.

A few miles further on we changed on to the broad-gauge railway—the main line from Belgrade to Nish. The last fifty miles were accomplished in one of the trucks to which we had become accustomed, labelled in Serb and French, "Horses 8. Men 40." The sides were open, giving us a fine cross-ventilation, with a full view of the moonlight scenery. Once or twice the conductor came along with a candle-lantern, to see that all was well—for nothing could be easier than to push an undesirable fellow-passenger out of the side of the truck, to take his

chance in any ravine over which the train might be passing.

An old farmer sat up in the corner with a friend and discussed the price of goats. Before the war, he said, he could buy them for five dinars ; now, the price was nine or ten.

A passenger on the train asked the Professor to advise him about a sore throat ; and all went well until it came to a matter of writing out a prescription for a chlorate of potash gargle, which proved to be a little difficult even for one so well versed in the languages of Europe as our chief. However, the prescription was ultimately finished and contained directions in Serbian, German, and Latin. For this the man expressed his gratitude and insisted on tendering a fee of eightpence.

The train reached Nish at 11.30 P.M. and stopped in a siding. We climbed down, shouldered our baggage, and crossed several lines of rails, threading our way between trucks and other obstacles, and avoiding the larger pools of water, until we reached the dark and silent railway station. The station-master was aroused by a sleepy sentry, and told us that he had not received any message about us, and that it was too late to find accommodation for the night.

We found among the passengers who had alighted at Nish a Serbian officer, who very kindly offered to find us rooms in a building which had been taken over by the War Office. So, after waiting an hour for a conveyance, we set out, rattling along over the cobblestones, dropping into the holes, and being jerked over the boulders, until we reached the build-

ing in question, close to the public gardens at the end of the Rue Obrenovitch. The sentry informed us that there was no room for the British gentlemen, so our companion led us the round of the hotels in the town, but all were found to be full.

It was then proposed that we should go to the big military hospital near the station, but this idea was abandoned, owing to the prevalence of so much infectious disease. Finally the Professor bethought him of a certain abode where he had once stayed on the recommendation of the British Legation; so we turned towards it. We knocked up the slumbering household and found that there was a room vacant, so we bade good-night to our Serbian friend and entered into a very comfortable little room. The man who opened the door regretted that he had nothing to give us for supper except a bottle of "rakija," the Serbian spirit made from plums; so we fell back upon the bread and cheese which we had brought with us, and after the frugal repast we turned in for a few hours' sleep.

About 10 in the morning we went to the British Legation and got some letters, and also a welcome message that sixty packing-cases of stores were on the way from Salonica.

At the Conference, where Colonel Hunter explained the measures which he was taking to prevent the spread of typhus, we met a lady doctor, Dr. Hanson, on her way through to Kragujevatz, so we agreed to travel back together to Vrnjatchka Banja.

The evening after the conference, therefore, we three, with two Serbian gentlemen from our village, whom we met in the town, made our way to the

station and established ourselves in the luggage-van.

The official in charge was very friendly, and by the simple expedient of piling the luggage round the door the company within was kept small and select. At Stalatch, fifty miles north of Nish, the narrow-gauge line branches off up the western Morava valley, and at this junction we had to wait till early morning. At a cottage situated close to the station a "rest-room" had been engaged by the British Red Cross Society's unit for the convenience of the various British units in Serbia.* We went along to this cottage and had quite a good supper and a few hours' rest, and then proceeded on our way, reaching the Terapia in comfortable time for lunch.

One of the most strenuous days, as well as the most anxious, that we spent in Serbia was on the occasion of the fire which occurred in a corner of the Terapia towards the end of March. Schwind was the first to see the blue smoke issuing from between the tiles over the storerooms containing the sanatorium property. These rooms had been closed before we occupied the building, so that we consoled ourselves with the reflection that the fire had not originated in any part of our domain. Schwind told us of his discovery in the most casual way. He came into the bedroom shared by three of us and said: "Gwin, I'm in terrible trouble this morning; I don't know what clothes I'm to wear, and besides the hospital is on fire." Williams, Schwind, and Norris went across to investigate, and found a regular furnace

* An excellent piece of work due to the energy and foresight of Captain Bennett.

raging in the top-floor rooms over the kitchen and dining-room.

We summoned all our Austrian orderlies, and in a few minutes there was a line of helpers stretching from the fire down two flights of stairs to the water-supply in the basement. Buckets,* kettles, jugs and basins—all things capable of holding water—were requisitioned, and large quantities of water were thrown into the burning storerooms. Williams, Gwin, and Howard protected their heads from falling tiles by iron basins, and thus arrayed advanced into the fray and laid about them with much vigour. Downstairs salvage work went on apace, as the floors of the upper rooms were fast burning through. The whole of the linen belonging to the Terapia company was got safely away, and a great quantity of our stores. Many tins of various foods were, however, buried in the fragments which came down, but were not any the worse for that, as they were easily recovered afterwards from the *débris*. In the wards the nursing staff “carried on” with true British indifference to danger. The patients were fed and washed and well wrapped up, so as to be ready for removal if necessary. Gordon and Norris cut a hole in the ceiling of a room alongside the fire, and so were able to get into the loft above and throw water upon the burning roof, thus preventing the fire from spreading to the main ward of the Terapia. The Professor and the “Frau Doktor” (Mrs. Berry) worked with the rest, and the former, perched amid the smoke of the burning rafters,

* Fire-buckets, filled, some with water, others with sand, had been established in all the corridors within a day or two of our arrival, and fortunately we had also a large supply of buckets for other purposes.

distinguished himself by discharging a bucketful of water upon Williams and drenching him from head to foot ! By 11 o'clock the conflagration had been practically extinguished, and a little work, with an axe, followed up by a few more pails of water, completed the task ; which done, we had an enormous lunch, comprising the Mackonochie rations usually supplied at mid-day, together with the bacon and eggs which we should have had at breakfast.

It was not until some weeks later that we fully realised how the proverb "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good" applied to our fire. We proved its application for many a long day afterwards, as we came to place an ever-increasing reliance upon the *débris* of the fire whenever we wanted any article of china or glass, or any little thing in the way of electric light fittings. From the site of the fire came a quarter of a mile of stout copper wire, with large china insulators, which was to carry electric light and telephone to the convalescent hospital and the typhus baraque. Amongst the ashes were found irregular fragments of marble, which, shaped and cleaned up, became switchboards. Long glass rods were unearthed, and brass holders were not lacking, so that towel-racks sprang into being far and near. Taps and pipes there were found, which were called to higher service in the theatre, the ward, and the typhus baraque. Locks and keys in abundance, choked with cinders, were brought to the light of day, and affixed to doors long left unclosed. Nor was art wholly unremembered, for the one and only picture which graced the walls of the *Terapia* was rescued from the obscurity of this gold mine of an ash-heap.

In the last week of April, Williams, Schwind, Howard, and Norris made an expedition to Belgrade. On the way there we spent a night in the train. Two of us slept on the carriage seats, one on the floor, and one on the luggage rack; and slept very comfortably too, for this was after three months in Serbia! In the capital city we received a most cordial welcome from the military authorities, who took us to see the defences of the town; we entered the first line trenches, a few hundred yards from the Austrian lines, and saw the enemy positions on the islands and the opposite bank of the Danube. We were received with great hospitality by the officer in command of a Serbian battery, who showed us the ingenious arrangement of his guns, underground magazines and dug-out shelters.

We heard, too, of the exploits of a naval party who had fitted up a boat, armoured with railway iron, and mounted on it a torpedo tube. On discharging a torpedo, however, they found that the recoil cap-sized the vessel, so they fixed up a second tube on the opposite side of their craft. Thus equipped, they could discharge a weapon at the mark safely, taking care that the spare torpedo did no damage as it went away aft. The night we were at Belgrade this home-made outfit went across the river to an Austrian naval base near Semlin and blew up a monitor.

The journey back from Belgrade was the last that we took together, for Williams and Schwind returned to England through Russia a few days later, Howard and Norris came home *via* Italy, and Gwin stayed on until shortly before the third Austrian

invasion in the autumn. At this point then, with the breaking up of the glorious company of the "Majestic Five," ended three months of the most useful, absorbing, romantic, and adventurous life that anyone could wish to lead !

D. C. N.

A NOTE UPON NORRIS

BY

ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE UNIT.

This seems to be the best place for some words in season about Norris. He joined the mission already enjoying the nickname of the Boy Scout, and he had just that capacity for improvisation which is the essential quality of a scout and rendered him so useful to us at Vrintse. For instance, he not only provided the baraque with electric light, but he constructed a most elaborate system of communication between the Terapia and the typhus building. There were a telephone and a blue lamp in one of the Terapia bedrooms, and in theory, if a patient were seriously ill, Sister West at the baraque would be able to communicate at once with Sister Robertson at the Terapia. In practice the system was defective, and sometimes the bell would ring and the light flash when Sister West turned on the electric lights or did some other harmless necessary act. Once an alarm was produced by a flash of lightning, which set all the contrivances at work at once. But they were certainly ingenious. If Norris really was a

scout, General Baden-Powell ought to be very proud of him.

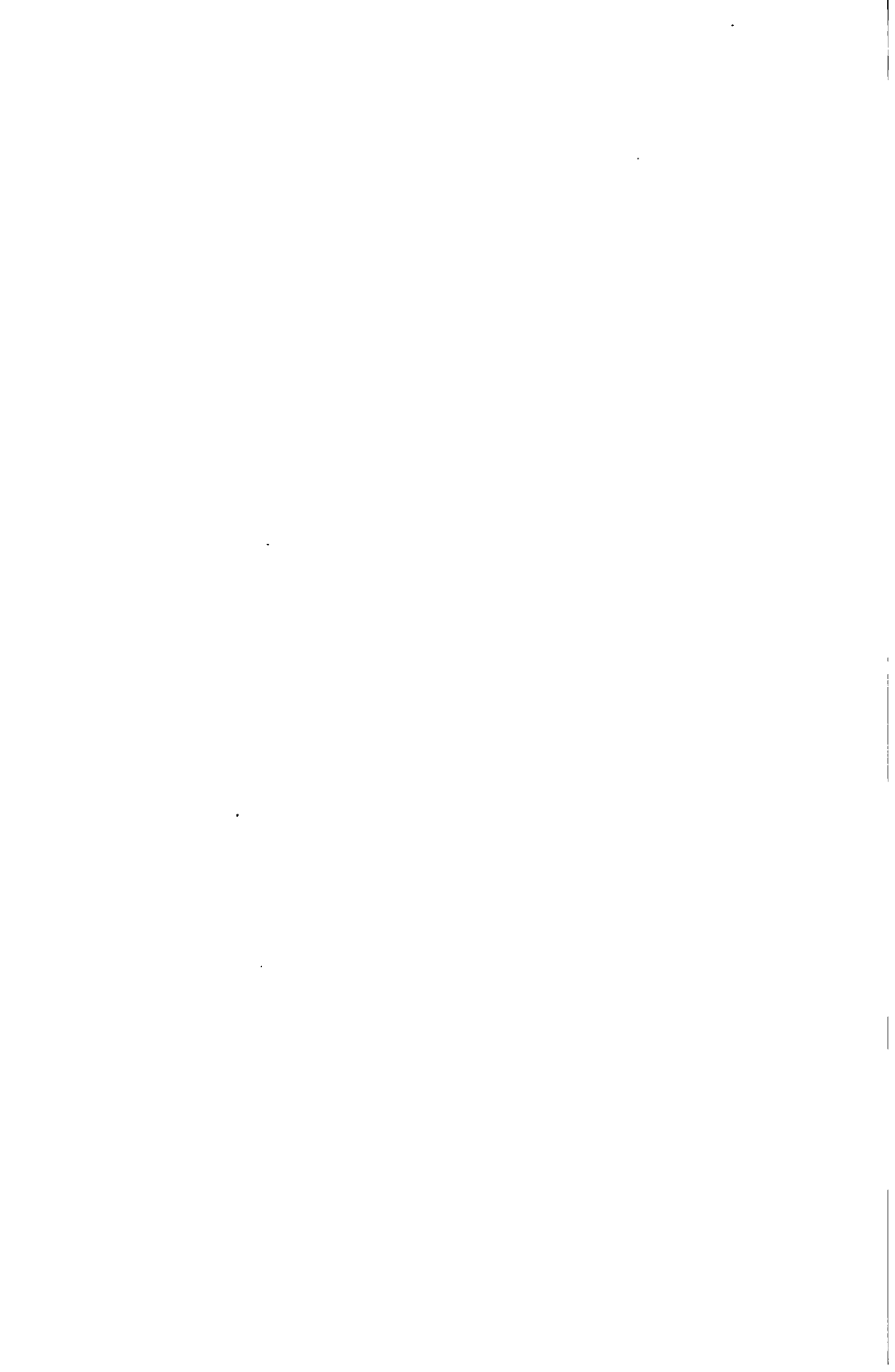
His experiments, however, were sometimes only made possible by acquisitions of very dubious character. One has doubts about the "accidental" nature of the breakages which put him in possession of porcelain, brass work, glass rods, and the rest. Nor can the impartial observer accept without question his statement that he "rescued" sundry valuable fittings from the "gold mine of an ash-heap," which was left by the fire. The fire not only left an ash-heap, it opened the locked storeroom of the Terapia Company. Not long after it had burned away the doors of the room Norris got in, and his own narrative hardly does justice to the fearful scenes of pillage which followed. What he took no one knows exactly. But several of his most ingenious devices made their appearance about this time, including the elaborate telephone apparatus connecting the Terapia with the School and the Baraque. As the fire could hardly have volatilised porcelain fittings and several hundred feet of copper wire, we should have been hard pressed to account for their disappearance from the storeroom. In the end the Austrian occupation solved our difficulties, and those who appropriated the whole of Serbia can hardly complain if a few trifling excesses of zeal on the part of Norris are also laid to their charge.



FIG. 9—THE FOUR WARD ORDERLIES AT THE TERAPIA,
AND A "LEPA SESTRA."



FIG 10.—ARCH OF WELCOME AT THE TERAPIA, SET UP
BY AUSTRIAN PRISONERS.



CHAPTER VII.

AUSTRIAN PRISONERS.

The Three at the Terapia—The Slave Market—Selection of Prisoners—Heterogeneous Collection of Nationalities—Many Czechs—Ward Orderlies—Relations between Serb Patients and Austrian Orderlies—Shoemaker and Carpenters—Language Difficulties—Gardener and other Outdoor Men—Messenger—Marketing—Julius—Hardships of Austrians in previous Winter—Kindness of Serb Villagers—Donna Quixota—The Orchestra—Curious Case of Personation—Commissions on Prisoners—Inoculation against Typhoid and Cholera—Devotion to the English Missions.

BETWEEN December, 1914, and November, 1915, the grey uniform of the Austrian prisoner was a very familiar object in the Serbian landscape. During that time most of the Serbian men of military age were with their regiments, and a great deal of the work of the country was carried on by the prisoners. They were constantly to be seen in gangs working on the roads ; they were employed in public gardens, Government factories, and even in the Arsenal of Kragujevatz, where they cleaned up their own cannon and the ammunition which the Serbs were waiting to return with interest to the Austrians at the earliest opportunity. Foreigners were surprised to notice how the prisoners worked without guards, and how they were to be met with in villages and market-places as if they belonged to the ordinary population. Most of the work of hospital servants throughout Serbia was done by Austrian prisoners. The Serbian Government bestowed them with no niggardly hand on British

missions, to be used for whatever purposes they desired.

When we reached the Terapia, we found there, as already mentioned, three Austrian prisoners, two of them engineers. Adolf Riedl, of the Prag Landsturm, our chief engineer, had been an engineer in a hydro-pathic at Marienbad. He was a German Bohemian, an excellent mechanic, with not a little contempt both for his Slav compatriots and his Serb captors. He understood his business thoroughly, and proved a most valuable servant. He steered us safely through several periods of deepest gloom, caused by impending catastrophes, such as permanent stoppage of water supply, or hopeless injury to indispensable and irreplaceable parts of the machinery. On these occasions he was always pessimistic and managed to infect our "Herr Ingenieur" with his pessimism, but things always came right in the end. Sometimes we think he acted on the principle of a doctor who paints his patients' condition in the darkest hues that the cure may seem the more miraculous!

Stefan Szilagyi, a Hungarian, had been an electrician at Carlsbad, and had spent some years in Edison's works in the United States. He was Riedl's right-hand man in the engine-room, and showed extraordinary ingenuity as a worker in metal. With limited and inferior materials and but few tools, he was constantly turning out masterpieces of craftsmanship. When a watering-pot was required for the garden, it was Szilagyi who made it, rose included, out of old petroleum cans. Surgical instruments, metal splints, kitchen utensils, watches, clocks, umbrellas, brooches, crochet needles, and countless other neces-

sary articles were repaired by him, or devised and manufactured by his resourceful brain and skilful fingers.

The third prisoner already in possession was a Czech, from the same Landsturm regiment as Riedl, a middle-aged man, slouching and unkempt, who was put into the kitchen. Here the lady cook found him a hopeless incubus, so he was moved upstairs, and under the kindly influence of the Lady of the Sewing Machine, he brightened up considerably and served the mission for many months with the fidelity and devotion of a Newfoundland dog. He considered that on account of having been married fifteen years he knew all about dust in corners and was an efficient housemaid, an opinion with which neither the Lady of the Sewing Machine nor her successors wholly concurred. He was once asked by a Serb lady how, being a Czech, he came to fight against his brothers in race. "Well," he replied, "we fought for one day, but we gave ourselves up in the evening."

With the exception of the three already mentioned, we did not obtain any Austrian prisoners until early in March, when a long-expected party arrived in the town. They were drawn up in the market-place next day and the two British units summoned to inspect them and make their choice. The scene was a strange one and very like a slave market. Though March had arrived, there was as yet no promise of spring, and the snow, slush, and chilly wind seemed more suitable to an English December. The men looked ill and wretched after the privations of the winter, and the ravages of typhus and recurrent fever. But even in these depressing circumstances the young sergeant in charge

gave briskly, on his own initiative, the word of command, and made his men stand at attention. It struck the writer that a man who could behave in a "slave market" as if he were on a review ground had a character worthy of further investigation, and the first man taken from the ranks was the sergeant. The prisoners were selected by the principal lady of each unit in turn; a knowledge of English or German was reckoned valuable, signs of good health were looked for, and the trade of the prisoners was taken into account. When the selection was finished the new orderlies had to go through the ordeal of the bath, which awaited all new arrivals at our hospitals, whether patients or prisoners. Thus they gained the first asset of entrance into a British hospital—farewell to the louse, hitherto an inseparable companion.

About a week later another contingent of prisoners arrived and another "slave market" was held. On this occasion a curious *contretemps* occurred. The selected prisoners were conducted to the baths and their clothes removed to be disinfected, but by some misunderstanding the fresh clothes, which should have been sent, never arrived. It was only late in the afternoon that the non-arrival of the prisoners at the hospital was noticed. Search was made for them, and they were discovered still in the bath-house, minus clothes, having enjoyed for some seven hours the hot sulphur fumes with which the atmosphere was impregnated.

Among our prisoners were representatives of most of the heterogeneous elements of which the "ramshackle empire," as Mr. Lloyd George aptly called it, is composed. There were Czechs and Germans from

Bohemia, Ruthenians and a Jew from Galicia, Italians from Trieste and Dalmatia, Magyars from Hungary, Serbs, some from Hungary, some from Bosnia and Slavonia. Prisoners from Bohemia, especially Czechs, formed the largest group in our hospitals, as seemed to be the case also in all parts of Serbia which we visited. There are still people in England who look upon the Austrians as a nation, in the sense in which French or Germans are a nation and who also have a vague idea that there is an Austrian language. We have often wondered where they would find this language among this heterogeneous collection of nationalities. It was certainly not German, whether of the Viennese or other variety. Not more than half our prisoners spoke German, although when choosing our prisoners we had looked for knowledge of German both as being useful in itself and also as in many cases evidence of better education. Men of each nationality had their own mother tongue, to which they clung tenaciously, and among our own prisoners Czech was the predominant language.

The first step after obtaining the prisoners was to allot them their several avocations. A considerable number were made ward orderlies, the men of better education being generally selected for this work unless some special experience made them more useful elsewhere. In the Terapia we had four ward orderlies on day duty, who worked together for several months (Fig. 9). Head of these was the sergeant already mentioned; keen and alert, with an appetite for knowledge of any kind, he soon learnt to make a bed with the dexterity of a trained nurse

and to lift a patient with the skill showing an inborn aptitude. He was a Czech and had Bohemian history at his finger tips ; we have a shrewd suspicion that he had visions of changes in the map of Europe which hardly come into the schemes of the Central Empires. On the same side worked another Czech, Johann, red-haired and with a face rather like an Italian St. John, slack and amiable, and, alas, with a penchant for the forbidden attractions of a café on the hill hard by, which led ultimately to disastrous results. On the other side of the ward were placed two German Bohemians ; one was a head waiter from Marienbad, once in the Carlton Hotel, who spoke English perfectly. He alone among the prisoners manifested any trace of animosity towards the English. One day soon after he came he was told to clean a window, and was heard to mutter, "I suppose the English woman wants to kill me." Signs of any feelings of this sort, however, soon disappeared. His knowledge of English was most useful, and he became in many ways the sister's right hand. But he never took enthusiastically to ward work, and when he was moved later into the kitchen and dining-room he was much happier, and more in his element, wafting about dishes and trays and studying the gastronomic idiosyncrasies of the Unit. His companion was a schoolmaster, inclined to be sentimental and melancholic, longing for home and a *fiancée* he had left there. He was a Protestant, and thought that things had gone very wrong for Germans and English to be fighting one another instead of standing together and ruling the world. We tried to cheer him up by making him

learn English and getting him to teach German to some of the Unit, but even this did not greatly exhilarate him. He was a very conscientious little man and assiduous in his care of the patients, especially if they were seriously ill.

Bohemia is not unlike Ireland, in that there is a Czech majority corresponding to the Nationalists, and a German minority corresponding to the Ulstermen. Unionist and Nationalist had it out sometimes in our ward ante-room, in the persons of the schoolmaster and the sergeant, the former generally in friendly banter, the latter always in deadly earnest.

The relations between Serbian patients and Austrian orderlies were at times a little difficult. It is a somewhat topsy-turvy state of things for the captor to be put under the charge of the captive. As a rule the Serbian soldier was a simple, large-hearted, friendly person, and, though he believed firmly that if only his armies were let go they would be at Budapest and Vienna in no time, he had no personal malice towards his Austrian opponents, and accepted their ministrations, and even a certain degree of control, in good part. Prisoners of Slav race certainly fitted in best as a rule, but success or failure in regard to the patients was largely a matter of individual character.

A good instance of the force of personality overcoming the disadvantages of race was to be seen in the head orderly at the school, a sergeant from Vienna, Josef Merstaling, selected at the second "slave market," a German, not a Slav, by race. Mr. Gwin, our American volunteer, reigned over the school, our second hospital, with four Austrian

prisoners under him. Mr. Gwin and his sergeant were somewhat like a shepherd and his dog in their relation to the school, and indeed there seemed to be between them something like the mutual understanding, and the devotion without words which exist between a Highlander and his collie. There was no smarter soldier than the sergeant, none more wholly correct in all that he did, in the promptitude with which he would salute a Serbian officer, the immaculate condition of his wards and dressing-room, the keenness he displayed in bandaging and dressing. Over the patients, and also over the other orderlies, he exercised extraordinary influence; they received his rebukes with docility and his jokes with appreciation. There was at one time among the patients a wounded Herzegovinian, more Serb than the Serbs, as volunteer Herzegovinians are wont to be. This young man loved to tease the Austrians and to try to draw the sergeant. On one occasion when the latter was dressing the wound of an Austrian patient the Herzegovinian remarked exultantly, "Ah! that was made by a Serb!" "Yes, and yours was made by a 'Schwab,'" answered the sergeant, using himself the somewhat contemptuous term applied to Austrians and Germans. The laugh which followed was on *his* side!

Several of the Austrian orderlies showed great devotion to the patients under their care. This was especially the case in a young Czech, named Chylle, a machine-gun sergeant, who was head orderly at the Baraque during the summer. At this time the beds were largely occupied by children, and to see this strapping young fellow washing and attending to

these infants like a most devoted and well-trained nursemaid was quite touching. There was one child, by name Janko, a most entertaining little person, who came in for an operation for harelip and was for many weeks the pet of the ward, and to him the sergeant was a most constant slave.

Besides the ward orderlies an orderly was assigned to each floor of the Terapia, to look after rooms and corridor. In the basement reigned Pekarek, also a Czech, by occupation furniture designer, and storyette writer. He did sterilising and had charge of the theatre under the theatre sister; he unpacked packing-cases and looked after clothes and blankets stored in the basement under Miss Dickinson; he helped in the complicated arrangements for the labelling, disinfecting, and storing of patients' clothes under the "Herr Ingenieur" and the commissaire. Most people who wanted anything called upon Pekarek, but with so many duties and so many masters it is not surprising that his work was considered by some extremely "sketchy."

In the basement we also had a shoemaker, a most valuable person, for whom a little workshop was rigged up, and who made and mended footgear for the Unit, the prisoners, and sometimes for friends outside.

Among the outdoor men at the Terapia there were three carpenters, whose time was always fully employed. These three carpenters afforded a curious instance of the language difficulties between the prisoners themselves. One spoke only Czech, one Czech and a little German, while the third spoke only Italian. Consequently if No. 1 had anything impor-

tant to say to No. 3 it required the assistance of No. 2 and also of a member of the Unit who knew both German and Italian before they could communicate with one another! The Italian-speaking carpenter came from Trieste, a town most of whose inhabitants in speech, appearance, and sentiment are as Italian as if they were on the other side of the Adriatic. This man, who was both anti-militarist and anti-Austrian, would have made his escape when the war broke out, if the frontier had not been guarded. He related with much satisfaction how once, on Garibaldi's birthday, some of the citizens of Trieste had managed to hoist the Italian flag on to the town-hall. There was a great row in consequence, but the Austrian authorities never discovered the culprits.

During the course of the summer, some time after the entrance of Italy into the war, news came that prisoners of Italian race were to be passed over to the Italians and be sent to Italy. We had at that time three Austrian Italians. They came up delighted at the news, assuring us that the only thing which would have reconciled them to leaving our Mission was the prospect of going to Italy, which they evidently looked upon as a mother country from which they had been cruelly separated. Alas! poor Italians, the expected order to depart never arrived, and although they started indeed for Italy it was to take part in that terrible retreat through Albania, along roads now thickly strewn with the bones of Austrian prisoners.*

* Two of them, we have since heard, reached Italy, but we have no news of the third.

We had other outdoor men, whose work consisted in cutting wood, looking after the garden and disinfectors, and doing various odd jobs. Among these was one Dushan, a Serb from Slavonia, strong, well-knit and sturdy, like a well-bred cob. He was a good worker, but liked intervals for meditation, and the English orderly whose department was the oversight of the outdoor prisoners always had to keep him well in view. When Jones had this department Dushan found that his moments of meditation and chances of snatching a surreptitious cigarette were sadly interfered with, and he was heard to remark plaintively that he could never sit down but his "mali brat" (little brother) was certain to come and rout him out. "Brat" is the usual term used by Serbs for their friends, and the name of "Little Brother" clung to Jones for ever after. Later on, when we put prisoners into the kitchens, Dushan became cook to the patients and orderlies. He occasionally fed the prisoners on burnt beans, but fear of the watchful eye of the ward sister kept him up to the mark as regarded the patients! One prisoner acted as messenger to the commissaire. He spent most of his time going backwards and forwards into the town, bringing up the daily supplies, and doing innumerable errands. For a considerable part of our time a German Bohemian, named Heidler, a tall young fellow, with an engaging, ever-ready smile, held this office. Heidler was frequently abstracted from the commissaire to go marketing with Miss Dickinson. He spoke Serbian well, and would drive excellent bargains with the market-women, in the most friendly fashion. Often they

went to the Trstenik market in the Major's wagonette, Heidler sitting on the box. There they would buy, among other things, sheep, pigs, geese, and chickens, which were brought home some on the box, some inside the carriage, the whole equipage looking like a "Return from the Foray" or some similar pictorial subject.

Last but not least should be mentioned "Julius." Julius was a Hungarian who had been a patient in another hospital in Vrn̄tse, and who when recovered was passed on to us at an early period of our career. He was first kitchen boy, and later became cook to the staff. He also had in his charge the various animals brought from Trstenik or elsewhere, both in their life and death—especially the latter, as he was by trade a butcher. Julius was quite a good cook and keen about his work. On his own initiative he levelled during the summer a bit of rough ground at the foot of the steps to our dining-room, and every day when fine he used to carry out our tables and chairs to his "Restauration zum Rothen Kreuz," as he called it. He was very amenable to those who knew how to manage him, but his relations with the other kitchen servants were not always cordial, and he occasionally got into the commissaire's black books by speaking in a manner unbecoming in a prisoner. Once, having been told to be in the commissaire's room at a certain time, he never appeared till sent for, and when asked the reason why, replied, coolly, "I had no time"—at which it is not surprising that the wrath of the commissaire descended upon Julius. The Professor said he must be punished, and informed him that he would have to cut wood during all his spare time for the next

two or three days. But it appeared that Julius had, officially, no spare time, and the lady who reigned over the kitchen did not see why spare time should be made for Julius, simply in order that he might be able to fulfil his punishment—which story illustrates two difficulties which often beset the Heads of the Unit ; one was to avoid treading on the toes of Heads of departments and others, and the other was to find punishments for prisoners.

The prisoners were all under a Serbian lieutenant, who visited us occasionally, and to whom any cases of serious misdemeanour were reported. As a rule we maintained discipline among the Austrians without any system of punishment. If a prisoner proved unsatisfactory, which was not often the case, we asked for his removal and another was sent in his place. The Serbs themselves were more severe in their methods, and we often heard of prisoners working in native hospitals being flogged. If, however, the flogging was of the same kind as that witnessed in the only case which came under our personal observation, it was not a painful proceeding. One of our orderlies once took advantage of the absence of most of the Unit at a picnic to go down to the town and return home drunk. He was reported to the authorities, and the lieutenant in charge came up to administer punishment. The prisoners were all summoned and drawn up in line to witness the proceeding. The lieutenant first harangued the culprit and then administered several cuts with his riding whip ; no clothing was removed, and the victim ran about trying to elude the cuts like a frightened dog. The effect was distinctly comic, and the suffering inflicted was much more mental than

physical. Some of the better-class Austrians were indignant and considered it a humiliating performance, but we fancy the victim himself would certainly have preferred it to the more drastic methods of Prussian, or even Austrian, military discipline. It bore, indeed, little resemblance to the barbarous military floggings which were common even in England only half a century ago. The commissaires also exercised jurisdiction over the prisoners in their own hospitals, but practically the Professor had the prisoners and most matters concerning them under his own control. If we wanted any special work done, we asked for more prisoners ; thirty, for instance, were sent us daily for the drainage of the marsh as long as that work was in hand, and later a considerable number were supplied for the building of the slaughter-house. We had about sixty or seventy working in the hospitals, and with the addition of the men for the slaughter-house the number came to nearly a hundred. We felt rather as if we were in the Southern States of America before the abolition of slavery, or perhaps a better parallel was that of feudal lords, with retainers who were forced to give their service. Serbia certainly had an immense amount of cheap labour at her disposal at that time, and it seems a pity it was not employed with more permanent effect. There was a great deal of it used in scraping roads free from mud, which the next rain put back again.

Austrian prisoners were generally very glad to get into a British mission, especially in the spring of 1915, for there is no doubt that during the previous winter they had had a very bad time indeed. But it is hardly fair to blame on that account either the Government

or the Serbian people. The Government of a more developed country than Serbia would find it hard to deal with such a large increase in mouths to be fed at a time when there was no money, and when the country was just recovering from a devastating invasion. If the Austrians suffered that winter, so did the Serbs. The Austrian prisoners were treated much the same as the Serbian soldiers, but were less able than the latter to withstand hardships and to thrive on a wretched diet. Typhus decimated them earlier, and more universally, probably owing to the way in which they were crowded together. Our head orderly, the sergeant at the Terapia, described how throughout the winter he had lived with 250 other men in a small house just outside Trstenik. They had neither beds, blankets, nor even straw to sleep upon, and were fed on the scantiest of food. They had no guards, but each sergeant had under him fifty men, and was responsible with his life if any should escape. Many of the prisoners fell ill and were carried off to the hospital. Here, too, they lay on the floor with nothing to cover them unless they were the fortunate possessors of a great-coat. Our informant stated that of his party 50 per cent. died—of eleven Italians whom he had under his charge only one survived.

The peasants in the neighbourhood showed the prisoners a good deal of kindness. On a hill above the house where they lived stood a village graveyard. Here, every Saturday, according to the strange Serbian custom, plates of food were put upon the graves, services held over them, and the food afterwards given away, the recipients eating it benefiting in some mystic manner the souls of the deceased. Every

Saturday the kindly villagers called up the hungry prisoners and bestowed upon them this food, regardless of the fact that they were enemies. Undoubtedly the relations between the peasants and the prisoners were generally perfectly friendly.

During the summer we frequently took walks in the mountains, accompanied by some of the prisoners, to gather fruit for the hospital or sometimes to get wood. During these walks we often saw instances of kindly feeling on the part of the peasants towards the prisoners. On one occasion we reached a remote saw-mill on a mountain stream. The proprietor, a well-to-do peasant, brought rakija, the native spirit, especially for the Austrians.

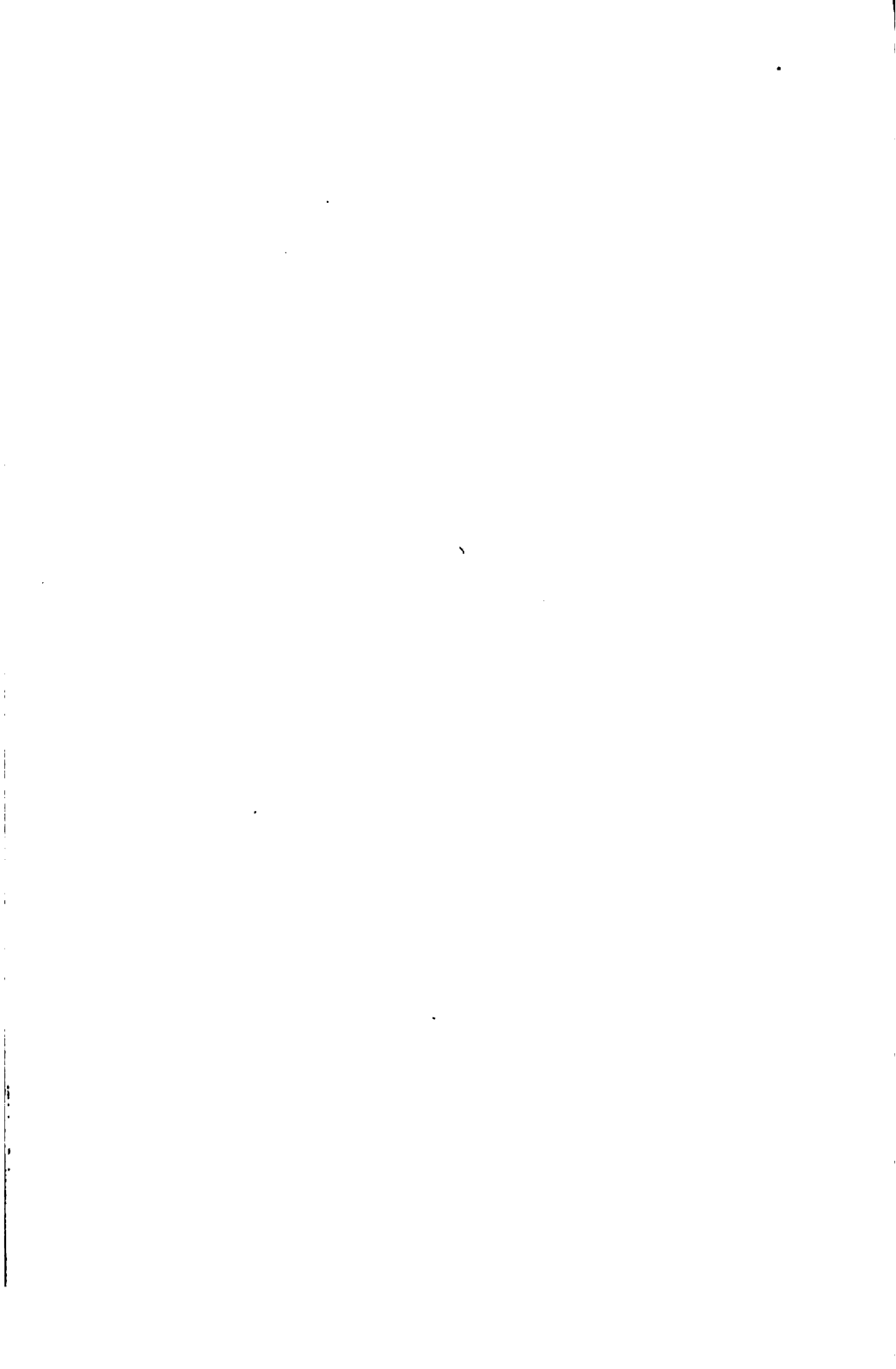
On the whole the Austrian prisoners in our service, and I think in that of all other British missions in Serbia, had by no means a bad time, and they generally showed their appreciation of their treatment by doing good work. It may be added that we always paid our prisoners a small weekly sum, according to the rules laid down by the Geneva Convention. This, although merely of the nature of pocket-money, encouraged the men to work well, and its withdrawal in cases of idleness or misconduct was one of our methods of punishment. Some of the prisoners were possibly occasionally a little spoiled by sympathetic members of the Unit, but probably this did little harm either to the spoiled or the spoilers. Perhaps one of the worst offenders in this respect was one of our V.A.D.'s, whom we will call Donna Quixota, because that is a name which certainly fits her well. She was tall and comely, indeed beautiful, though not exactly



FIG 11.—AUSTRIAN PRISONERS AT THE TERAPIA PREPARING FOR OUR WEEKLY INSPECTION.



FIG. 12.—INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION INQUIRING INTO THE CONDITION OF OUR AUSTRIAN PRISONERS. THE PRESIDENT, AN AMERICAN, IS ADDRESSING THEM IN CZECH.



of the buxom type which fulfils the Serbian ideal of the "lepa sestra" (the Beautiful Sister) (Fig. 9). On the voyage out she had passed her time feeding miserable animals and attending to the seasick and infirm. She was always looking for and helping the sick and suffering, always standing up for the oppressed. If she sometimes imagined the suffering or mistook the oppressor for the oppressed, "Que voulez-vous?"—she was a feminine Don Quixote! She was splendidly genuine, and before the final release of the Unit she was reduced to the depths of destitution in regard to shoes and clothes, as she had given away most of her belongings. She would have driven a Charity Organisation Committee to distraction, and she made Heads of units and keepers of stores feel stony-hearted misers, when they withstood the white heat of her generosity. Donna Quixota pitied the poor prisoners and tried to alleviate their sad lot by doing part of their work herself! She thought Julius overworked—Julius, the ever-growing rotundity of whose form made him resemble an incipient alderman—and she would squeeze time from her multitudinous duties to wash dishes or peel potatoes for him. One day she was seen vigorously sweeping a garden path while Johann of the auburn hair reclined at ease on the grass by the side, enjoying his off-duty hour. I thought of Gilbert and Sullivan's line "the prisoner's lot is not a happy one" and wished for a camera! But the proceeding was too much even for the easy-going Johann, and he spoilt the picture by springing up and taking the broom out of the hands of Donna Quixota.

During the summer Vrnjatchka Banja was visited

by an orchestra from Nish, which had gained great renown throughout Serbia. More than half of this was composed of prisoners, mainly Bohemians. Performances in aid of the widows and orphans of Serbian soldiers were held in the park on three consecutive days, and were attended by most of the inhabitants of the place, including many of the prisoners. Excellent music was performed at these concerts, and the Slav hymn was sung over and over again amidst scenes of tremendous enthusiasm, the whole audience joining in. The thrilling tones of this hymn, which is the national anthem for all Slav races, and is anathema to Germans, frequently resounded through our wards, patients and prisoners singing it together. Most Slav races are extremely musical, and in the evenings our prisoners frequently amused themselves by singing charming Bohemian folk-songs. We had to be careful, however, about what the prisoners sang, as Austrian airs gave great offence.

One of the Czech prisoners constructed a violin for himself out of the tin sides of a biscuit box, and produced with it quite creditable harmony. At another hospital in the town the First Violin from the Prague Grand Opera held the menial position of scrubber in the wards, but when distinguished guests visited the town his services in his former professional capacity were often requisitioned for their evening entertainment.

A curious instance of personation, which came under our cognisance, shows that sometimes the lot of an Austrian prisoner was considered more enviable than that of a Serb soldier, and illustrates also the

small difference that existed between the Serbs of Serbia and the Serbs of Austria.

A Serbian soldier, by way of evading military service, deserted from his regiment, donned an Austrian uniform, and gave himself up as an Austrian deserter. He was made prisoner accordingly. The fact that he spoke Serbian perfectly, and knew no other language, was nothing extraordinary in an Austrian prisoner, and was explained by his stating that he came from one of the many villages in Austria-Hungary where all the inhabitants speak Serbian. We found him among the prisoners at the Merkur when we took this over as one of our hospitals, and there he remained for some time without attracting any particular attention. One day a peasant appeared at the hospital to inquire whether his son was a patient there, and the name he gave was that of the pseudo-prisoner. He was told there was no patient of that name, only an Austrian prisoner. "Oh, my son's not a 'Schwab'!" said the old man, and away he went. After this the man might have remained undetected until after the war. But for some reason he chose to steal a quantity of morphia, and this was found upon him. His coolness then vanished, and while the case was under consideration he ran away. He was followed and arrested, and the whole story came to light. If he thought he would fare better as a Serbian deserter than an Austrian thief he was mistaken, for the poor man was eventually shot.

As the summer advanced, and Serbia passed out of the want and misery of the winter months into comparative peace and plenty, the Austrian prisoner

shared to some extent in the general prosperity. In other respects also his condition changed. He was no longer the comparatively free but neglected being he had been during the earlier months of his captivity. No longer might he wander about at will and eat at any café, if he possessed the wherewithal. He might go nowhere without a permit, and woe betide him if he were found at a café. These restrictions, which were not always wisely enforced, especially irritated the Slav prisoners, and rather damped the ardour of some of the Pan-slavists among them.

The prisoner had in fact come out into the limelight ! Commissions were constantly looking him up. International commissions to compare his condition with that of prisoners in other lands, Serbian commissions, some to see that he was properly treated, others to make sure that he was not being pampered (Fig. 12). When he was not being interviewed by commissions, he was probably being marched down to the town to be inoculated against various diseases. This was done at the request of the Austrian Red Cross by the French Sanitary Mission which had undertaken the work of inoculation throughout the district. The Serbian civil population did not respond over-readily, but the Austrian prisoner had no choice. Strict regulations, however, were issued by the Serbian Government as to cessation of work before and after inoculation. If one was merely a member of a British Unit, one got through typhoid inoculation as best one could, without stopping work ; but if one was an Austrian prisoner things were different !

So sometimes the Austrians were all sent to bed, and doctors, sisters, and lady orderlies washed up dishes

and carried in the beds of patients. To do the Austrians justice, however, they showed no desire to keep strictly to the regulations, or even to profit by bad arms !

In the month of June, when some of the hospital sisters returned to England, they left carrying great bouquets presented by Austrian orderlies, who had been down to the town in the early hours of the morning to procure them. The photograph of this send-off would scarcely be pleasing to the German Emperor, being evidence that the doctrine of "Hate to England" is scarcely as potent in the subjects of his Austrian ally as he would wish. Still less pleasing would be the photos of the triumphal arches (Fig. 10) which were erected at each hospital by the prisoners, to greet the "Frau Doktor" on her return from a brief visit to England in September, 1915. For some days beforehand Austrian orderlies were industriously making Union Jacks, and were sometimes scandalised to find that members of the Unit could not always tell them which was the right side up.

Fig. 13 also shows the friendly spirit displayed by the prisoners towards our Mission.

Besides the prisoners employed in the various hospitals, about 120 more were at the disposal of the town engineer ; others were in the service of the mayor. Thus there were altogether in Vrnitse some 300 Austrian prisoners. It is worth noting that there were no Serbian soldiers in the place, except those who were patients in the hospital, and there were not even any policemen until the Professor asked for and obtained four gendarmes to see that the new sanitary regulations were enforced.

F. M. D. B.

CHAPTER VIII.

MERCURY AND ATHENE.

Villa Merkur—Plan of Ventilation—Latrines (Inspection of)—
Villa Atina—Preparation of—Difficulties—Insanitary Surround-
ings—Arrangement of Work among the Six Hospitals controlled
by our Unit—Civilians in the Atina—Military and Medical
Organisation at Vrn̄tse—Major Gashitch, the Director—Mr.
Neuhut, the Dolmetch—The Commissaires—Mr. Boshko Marko-
vitch—Catering—Mr. Milutin Jovanovitch—Other Commissaires
—Report of the Director of Hospitals—Letter from the Com-
mander-in-Chief.

BEFORE the full complement of the hospitals under our charge was reached two more were added to those already described. These were the Villa Merkur and the Villa Atina. The Villa Merkur was a fine building standing in its own grounds at the northern end of the town, about a mile from the Terapia. It was a typical boarding-house, with a number of little rooms opening into long corridors, and was prepared for use by taking away all the doors, removing panes of glass from both ends of the corridors, and opening the top sashes of the windows in each room. This, in effect, converted a corridor, with rooms on each side of it, into a long ward divided into cubicles with a through current of air passing from one end to the other. It was at this hospital that an order was given that a certain window should be kept permanently open. But on three successive mornings the Professor, on his round, found it closed. As argument and peaceful persuasion seemed unavailing, he took up a stick and in the presence of a large crowd of inmates drove it through

the glass. The news of this drastic act reverberated throughout Vrnse and even beyond, and produced an excellent effect. At the same time it gave the chief actor in the incident a reputation as a window-smasher which he really hardly deserved. For, with the exception of the twelve panes at the *Terapia* which were removed by Gordon at his request, it was the only window that he broke during the whole of his stay in Serbia.

The low-lying situation of this hospital caused us some engineering difficulties; the site was in the former bed of the river, now canalised, and after heavy rain it was not uncommon to find three feet of water in the cellar. This had to be baled out from time to time, as there was no other way of getting rid of it.

The latrines within the house were in the usual unspeakable condition and had to be closed down at once, a new one being built in the garden. Here were also built the usual destructor, boiler, and other accessories. It may be mentioned here that we had no real difficulty in teaching the Serbs to use dry-earth latrines, to which they were wholly unaccustomed, in a decent and proper manner. But it involved a good deal of patience and perseverance on the part of the English. It is of no use merely telling a Serbian soldier what you want him to do. You must see for yourself that he does it, and go on telling him and correcting him until he understands that you are in earnest and mean to be obeyed. After that you must still keep an eye upon him, lest he should lapse into evil ways. As a rule it took about a fortnight to teach the Serbs to keep the latrines absolutely clean. These had to be visited at least once a day, and if

anything was found wrong, the offender, if he could be detected, was called up and lectured. At the same time, the Austrian orderly in charge was reminded that it was his duty to see that the place was always kept thoroughly clean. "There must be no flies and no smell, and if I find either, you will get into trouble," was a threat which at first had to be frequently used and acted upon. Soon both Austrians and Serbs, when they had learnt that we were not to be trifled with, themselves took great pains to maintain order, and it was the Serb soldier who instructed the newcomers. On one occasion, when a large batch of newly-arrived convalescents was admitted to the school, things began to go wrong. Then uprose the older inhabitants. "Look here," said they to the new-comers, "we cannot allow this sort of thing in our nice clean latrines. We won't stand it, and you must remember that you are not now in a Serb but in an English hospital." Then peace and cleanliness reigned again.

THE ATINA.

On March 19th Major Gashitch, who had been much impressed with the thoroughness of our sanitary measures, asked us to take over the Villa Atina, which had been in use as a Serb hospital, mainly for medical cases. The need for an additional hospital was at that time not urgent, but the typhus epidemic was by no means over, and we might at any time be called upon to receive a large influx of either sick or wounded. It was well, therefore, to be prepared, and the Major's idea was that we should convert the Villa Atina into a hospital on the English model. To

this we agreed, with the stipulation that when ready it should remain under our own control and not be handed over to anyone else. We were prepared to use it as a hospital for medical cases, typhus or wounded, as might be necessary. To this the Major readily agreed, and he afterwards loyally kept his word. The building was never used for any other purpose without our full consent. The usual transformation from a Serb to an English hospital then took place. All floors and walls were scrubbed and whitewashed, the cesspool was emptied, the latrines were filled up, and the dry-earth system was introduced. In the courtyard, Krish, the Czech carpenter, under the superintendence of Schwind and Blease, built a new latrine with a concrete floor. The floor of the yard, which had been a muddy swamp, was raised some eight inches to allow the water to run away, and a destructor and a boiler for infected linen were installed in it. The adjoining road, which ran at a higher elevation behind the hospital, had been in the habit of discharging all its surplus rain water into our yard. This had to be remedied and involved an extensive reconstruction of the road itself. The courtyard and tiny garden were unsuitable for the disposal of excreta from the latrine, as the subsoil was found to consist of mere builder's refuse. The proprietor of a neighbouring garden, a doctor who ought to have been glad of the opportunity of enriching his soil without expense to himself, having declined our suggestion that we should do it for him, we made a large excavation in the courtyard and filled it in to a depth of three or four feet with suitable soil brought from the outskirts of the town. This

area was roofed over and the necessary trenches were dug in it. Subsequently as the area was found to be too small, we utilised also a patch of ground in the neighbouring park.

Finally, the pump in the courtyard was dismantled and the well closed, as there was plenty of water to be obtained from the public fountain a hundred yards away. The Atina was on the main street in the middle of the town, and it was impossible to make it as satisfactory as our other buildings. The neighbours threw rubbish over the fence, the fowls pecked about the yard, and the refuse from a restaurant, twenty yards higher up, occasionally offended the eyes and noses of our sanitary inspectors. But it was as healthy as we could make it, and with that we had to be content.

When all our work of preparation was finished our Unit controlled six hospitals, containing about 360 beds,* though the actual floor space admitted of rather more. The Terapia remained our principal surgical hospital, and the most serious cases, as far as possible, were lodged there. Mr. Panting took one side of the ward and the Professor the other, with Miss Chick as his house-surgeon. The sisters were Sutherland, Hurley, and Barber.

The Terapia proved to be an admirable hospital for these serious cases. The wide doors at the end of the ward opened directly on to the hillside behind the building, and when the weather became warm and fine it was easy for the orderlies to carry the stretcher beds

* Terapia, 60; school, 40; baraque, 40; Drzhavna, 60; Merkur, 80; Atina, 80. But the numbers varied at different times, being sometimes more, sometimes less, than is here indicated.

out on to the grass, where the patients lay all day under the trees (Fig. 3). Occasionally the onset of one of the terrific thunderstorms of the Balkan summer would provide an exciting ten minutes' work for the staff, doctors, sisters and orderlies dashing out to rescue the drenched but generally hilarious patients. When these serious cases had been got over the difficult stage they were drafted off to the school, where they were nursed by Gwin and his orderlies, Miss Parkinson attending every day to help in the dressings. The Baraque, of which the Frau Doktor was the medical officer, at first accommodated mainly typhus cases. But as we considered that typhus, in the absence of lice, was never transmitted from one patient to another, we admitted cases of recurrent fever, malaria and other diseases, which required medical rather than surgical treatment. In the spring came a considerable number of cases of subacute scurvy, which seems to have been common at this time in most of the Serbian hospitals, and was doubtless due to the scarcity of fresh vegetables. Most of these presented extensive hæmorrhages in the calves of the legs; a few had the typical swollen gums. Careful dieting and other treatment soon cured these patients. It may be mentioned that the internal administration of chlorate of potash in considerable doses was found to be most efficacious. When the last of the typhus patients had gone, we used the Baraque for a time mainly as a hospital for children, most of the latter being cases of either diphtheria or tuberculosis. The Drzhavna, in the first few months, as has been already described, served chiefly the purpose of a clearing-house. But later Dr. Williams, and after him Dr. Helen Boyle and Dr. Christopherson in

succession, kept most of the cases permanently at the Drzhavna. When one of the small rooms had been appropriated for a theatre, many important operations were successfully performed in the converted restaurant; and, with an enthusiastic commissaire and excellent orderlies, it made a very good hospital.

The Merkur was a special hobby of the Professor's. He wished to show that, once properly prepared, it could be managed by local talent only. While he had his own cases in the Terapia, and exercised general superintendence over all the hospitals alike, he eventually acquired sole and undisputed authority within the precincts of the Merkur. But his position here was at first anomalous, and he merely visited the place in order to relieve Major Gashitch. Though his colleagues might criticise, they never envied him this burden, and never desired to share the responsibility of it. Mme. P——, an interned Austrian Serb, of great energy and enthusiasm but little training or experience, had been made matron-in-charge. Over the orderlies and patients she ruled despotically within the hospital, subject only, so far as medicine and surgery was concerned, to the Major and Mr. Berry. Her principal slave was Ferdinand, the head Austrian orderly, a stout and rather sleepy Czech. Every day she met the Professor with a beaming smile and her solitary English phrase "Is everything clean?" and then accompanied him on his melancholy round among the derelicts who filled the place. Behind walked Ferdinand and a young Serb, whose pockets bulged with bottles of pills and lotions. The chief difficulty in dealing with the Merkur in the early days was the absence of sufficient underclothing for the patients and

the consequent impossibility of enforcing proper personal cleanliness. This difficulty was solved with the arrival of the first consignment of stores from England, which included large quantities of linen and garments of all kinds, generously presented to us by the British public. The cleanliness of the Merkur itself at first was far from what we desired. Eventually Mme. P—— herself got typhus and went to the baraque. It was not until her place was taken by one of our sisters that the villa was at last thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and brought formally into our organisation. Late in the summer most of the remaining surgical cases were transferred to the Drzhavna and the Terapia, and the Merkur was filled with medical cases under the care of Dr. Inglis. These were nearly all tuberculous or dyspeptic. Most of them were more in need of fattening food and of fresh air than of medicine or surgery. When the fresh attack from the north began in September they were all hustled away, and their places were afterwards taken by wounded.

The Atina was not used as a hospital for some months after it was made ready. No patients came in until October, and during the holiday season it was a source of considerable trouble. Even in time of war there were many visitors to the Banja, and when so many buildings had been appropriated as hospitals it was extremely difficult to find lodging for all who wanted it. A few privileged civilians were therefore allotted rooms in the Atina, and for some weeks they and their families used, and abused, our disinfected rooms, whitewashed corridors and staircases, and carefully constructed and inspected latrines. The state of the

latrines during the period of the civilian invasion was very bad, and the Austrian orderly whose duty it was to look after them was reduced to despair. We could, and did, train the Austrians, when they needed it, in habits of decency, but we had very little authority over these civilians. It was therefore with a sigh of relief that we heard of the renewal of hostilities and gave our undesirable tenants notice to quit.

As all the members of our Unit had been definitely attached to the Serbian army, whose headquarters were at Kragujevatz, all instructions as to our work were received from that place. The regular channel of communication was through Major Gashitch, formerly a civilian doctor at Belgrade, who had had much military experience in various Balkan wars. His official post at Vrnitse was that of Director of all the hospitals, foreign as well as Serbian, and as, shortly after our arrival, there were in all no less than thirteen hospitals established there, it can readily be understood that his post was no sinecure. He was responsible for the equipment, provisioning and administration in general of all these hospitals. Strictly, no major operation was supposed to be performed in any foreign hospital in Serbia without the sanction of the Serbian medical officer in charge. But in practice this rule, in the case of our own Unit, and we believe in that of all the foreign units, became a dead-letter. As soon as the Serbs saw that the foreign doctors understood their business they gave them a perfectly free hand and refrained from any meddlesome interference.

The second Serbian official connected with the Mission was our "dolmetch" or interpreter, Mr. Neuhut, a hotel manager from Belgrade who had

spent many years in America, and whose knowledge of languages caused him to be attached jointly to both the British missions. He was a zealous and patriotic Serb, always willing to do whatever he could to aid us, and rendered us good service on many occasions. His health was not good, and he was thus precluded from serving his country in any more active sphere.

The commissariat department of the hospitals was in the hands of commissaires or "komesars," in our own case at first two elderly civilians, who visited daily to inquire into our wants. They were aided at the Terapia by a sub-commissaire, Mr. Boshko Markovitch, a young Serb of good education, who had been an official at Belgrade. He spoke French and German excellently, lived near the Terapia, and spent most of the day in our hospital. After a few days it was evident that he alone was quite able to cope with our needs, so he was appointed sole commissaire, the other two devoting themselves entirely to the service of the British Red Cross Unit.

We had been asked whether we should prefer to receive rations from the Government or money payment to enable us to buy our own provisions. As the latter was three dinars (francs) a day for each member of the Unit, we decided to accept this and do our own catering. This arrangement proved an economical one, as it enabled us not only to obtain all the food that we required, but left us with money that we could spend on hospital equipment and sanitation. Fuel, petroleum, and, later, petrol for our motor car were supplied to us free of cost by the Serbian authorities.

The registration of the patients, the supervision of our Austrian orderlies, and the lay administration in general of the hospital was in the hands of the commissaire, subject to our control. In many Serbian hospitals the commissaire is a most important functionary; in fact, he does everything not directly connected with the actual medical treatment of the patients. Mr. Markovitch, a most good-tempered but somewhat easy-going young man, got on very well with the Heads of the Unit, but if he had any complaint against them it was probably that they took the management of affairs too much into their own hands and did things for themselves which in other hospitals were usually done by the commissaire. Mr. Markovitch was commissaire not only of the Terapia, but also of our two neighbouring hospitals, the School and the Baraque, which were thus included under one administration. Of the commissaires at our other hospitals, by far the most important was Mr. Milutin Jovanovitch, an interned Austrian subject of Serb descent, who reigned at the Drzhavna, and of whom we shall have much to relate in the course of this narrative. A more admirable commissaire, or a more loyal and devoted colleague, it would be difficult to find in Serbia, and the whole mission as well as the patients and orderlies were greatly indebted to him for his services.

At the Villa Merkur, we had at first Mr. M——, a young Serb who kept a shop in the town. The latter occupied more of his attention than did his duties at the hospital. After repeated warnings and exhortations we were obliged to get rid of him, and subsequently, much to his annoyance, he had to



FIG 13.—MEMBERS OF THE UNIT AND AUSTRIAN PRISONERS, MAY, 1915.

The inscription says : " In remembrance of our imprisonment with Dr. Berry's English Mission, Serbia, 1915."

Photograph taken by special request of the prisoners and at their own expense.



FIG. 14.—THE HIGH ROAD FROM UZHITSA. EXTRICATING OUR MOTOR FROM THE MUD.

return to active service in the army. His place was taken by Mr. P——, an elderly, good-natured and pleasant Serb. Although by no means a brilliant or quick-witted person and almost totally devoid of initiative, he did his duty conscientiously and got on well with everybody ; but he required a good deal of supervision and prodding, in the absence of which the Merkur would soon have slipped back into an unsatisfactory condition. He was a married man and possessed a farm somewhere in the neighbourhood. In the summer time, when the plums were being gathered in, he requested leave of absence for a few days that he might return to his farm and superintend the making of "pekmes," the native plum jam, so well known to most members of the English missions in Serbia. Neither of these two commissaires spoke any language but Serbian. For a few weeks we had a youth named R——, who also spoke German and was of considerable use, being industrious and fairly attentive to orders, but, owing to his youth and inexperience, he had not much authority over the soldiers and did not get on particularly well with the Austrian orderlies. Finally, being anxious to obtain some linen shirts, instead of asking us openly for them he invaded the store-room at night through the window. Being caught in the act by the Austrian night orderlies, who duly reported the matter to us, he made matters worse by prevarication. At a kind of court-martial which we held he eventually confessed, and we promptly dismissed him from our service.

At the Atina our commissaire was another interned Austrian Serb, a well-educated and intelligent man,

who was also employed as a chemist in the military dispensary. He served us well, but, like some of the Serb commissaires, he made his escape with the Serb army before the Austrian invaders arrived. We subsequently heard that he had succeeded in reaching Switzerland in safety.

Early in May the Serbian authorities ordered an inquiry into the condition of all the hospitals at Vrn̄tse, with especial reference to their cleanliness and the manner in which the Austrian prisoners were being treated and to the work of the commissaires. A copy of the report based upon this inquiry subsequently came into our hands, and the following is a translation of that portion of it which relates to the hospitals under our management. The Atina, not being at that time occupied by patients, is not included in the report.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE RESERVE MILITARY HOSPITALS IN VRN-
JATCHKA BANJA.

"1. With regard to the examination of the *personnel* of the hospitals, I found the following conditions. [Here follows report on the condition of the Sotirovitch (Greek), Kr̄una (Serb), Avala, old Typhus Baraques, Shumadia and Zlatibor (British Red Cross) hospitals.]

"6. In the '*Merkur*' I found the prisoners clean, clothes and linen clean, dwelling-rooms very well furnished and clean.

"7. In the '*Terapia*' (including the School and new Baraque), I found the prisoners absolutely clean and in good order, clothes and linen clean, dwelling-rooms well arranged and clean.

"8. In the '*Dr̄z̄bavna*' the prisoners are absolutely clean and in good order, clothes and linen faultlessly clean, dwelling-

rooms very good and orderly. In this hospital complete order reigns among the Austrian servants, and I feel obliged to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Chief of the Volunteer English Mission, Professor Dr. James Berry, to all the other doctors, to the kind English Sisters and also to the Commissaire of this Hospital, M. Milutin Jovanovitch, for the excellent manner in which he has performed his duties and done such good work. I desire to call the attention of all the others to this, that they may take this hospital as an example of the way in which they should do their duty, which is truly hard enough and requires much watchfulness.

“(Signed) MAJOR DR. GASHITCH,

Director of Hospitals at Vrnjatchka Banja.

“April 29–May 12, 1915.”

Soon afterwards we were honoured by a visit from the Director-General of the Army Medical Department, who had motored over from Kragujevatz on an official visit of inspection. He spent the best part of a day in visiting all the hospitals, and a few days later we received the following letter of thanks :—

“MILITARY HEADQUARTERS MEDICAL DEPARTMENT
(No. 17026).

“To the Chief of the English Mission, Prof. Dr. James Berry.

“The Commander-in-Chief has ordered that the following shall be written to you :—

“Dear Sir,

“I have learnt with the greatest satisfaction from the report of the head of the Medical Department, who visited your hospitals at Vrnjatchka Banja, that there exists in these an extraordinary degree of order and cleanliness, and that our soldiers who have the good fortune to be under treatment in your hospitals receive unusual care and every comfort. In order to obtain better conditions for the treatment of our patients and to carry on the work of your hospitals in the

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best possible manner, you have erected or brought with you important contributions in the shape of buildings and stores.

"I have therefore considered it my pleasant duty to express to you and to your *personnel*, in the name of the Commander-in-Chief, in the name of the Serbian army and also of our wounded and sick soldiers, our heartfelt thanks for the trouble you have kindly taken and for all the services you have rendered to us.

"(Signed) VOIVODA (FIELD MARSHAL), K. PUTNIK,
*Commander-in-Chief and Adjutant to
H.M. the King.*

"Kragujevatz, May 12-25, 1915.

"It gives me much pleasure to be able to send you the above communication.

"(Signed) COLONEL DR. LAZAR GENTCHITCH,
Head of the Army Medical Department.

"Kragujevatz, May 13-26, 1915."

J. B.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SERB PEOPLE AS WE FOUND THEM.

The Barrier of Language—External Appearance of Things—National Costume—Primitiveness of General Standard of Life—Patriotism—Vanity—Personal Modesty—Want of Animosity against Individuals—Kindness of Heart—Women—Indifference towards Animals—Hospitality—Curiosity—Officials and Middle Class as a Rule Primitive—Mixing of Sexes—Spittoons in the Park—Official Slackness—"Backsheesh"—Exceptions—Gashitch Jovanovitch—Parallel between Serbs and Irish.

FOR those who enter Serbia for the first time it is easy to form an unfavourable opinion of the country and the people, which it is afterwards difficult to correct. This chapter is an attempt to estimate them at their true value, without extenuating anything, or setting anything down in malice. It describes as accurately as possible the atmosphere in which our work was carried on.

The chief barrier between ourselves and the Serbs was the language of the country. As it has practically nothing in common with either the Teutonic or the Latin origins of our own tongue, it proved for many of us an almost insuperable obstacle to free intercourse. We had the additional difficulty of being grouped together in English units, with Austrian prisoners to do the manual labour, and if we had occasion to speak any other language than our own it was German that was at once most serviceable and most easily practised. Not a few of

the Austrians spoke no German, but most of those inside the wards knew at least the elements of it, and several English people, after spending months in Serbia, returned home with a very slight acquaintance with the language of the Ally whom they had gone out to help and a vastly improved knowledge of the tongue of their most deadly enemies. In Serbian many got no further than the ordinary terms of greeting, easy numerals, and the names of essential hospital gear. The magic word "Dobro" ("Good") filled up the worst gaps. With different tones of voice it could be made to mean all sorts of things. In the interrogative it meant "How are you?"—in the hortatory "Cheer up!"—in the conclusive "That's all right!" and so on. It will be readily acknowledged that in this general inability to understand the Serb speech the English would fail to form a just opinion of their character. The practical inconveniences of daily life would assume an exaggerated importance, and many valuable qualities would escape notice.

Our Unit had three exceptions to the general rule. The Professor himself spoke Serb fairly well, and in turn delighted and disgusted the Serbs by his proficiency. It was something of a compliment, no doubt, to show such a knowledge of their language. But when he used his knowledge to bother their officials, and see through their excuses and make it impossible for them to evade and postpone in the characteristic Serb fashion, then he became a horse of another colour. Mrs. Gordon aroused nothing but admiration. She was almost the only member of the rank and file of the Unit who seriously attempted to acquire and

employ an extensive vocabulary. She worked for some weeks with the out-patients, getting details of their complaints before passing them on to the doctor, and if her grammar was inaccurate she wanted nothing of fluency. She was invaluable as an interpreter in the out-patient department. Miss Barber was little inferior to Mrs. Gordon. Mr. Berry had unquestionably the largest vocabulary, as he had to deal with all sorts and ranks of Serbians. Miss Barber acquired the phrases which enabled her to chat familiarly with peasants, and Mrs. Gordon specialised in the language of symptoms, but traversed a wide general field as well. The rest of us had very little to show, even after several months in the country, in the way of knowledge of the language of its inhabitants. But with the Professor, Mrs. Gordon, and Miss Barber the mission had a very good opportunity of obtaining an intimate knowledge of the Serbs and thus correcting superficial impressions.

The external aspect of things, in spite of the prevailing dirt, muddy or dusty roads, ill-paved streets, and deficient railways, was most attractive. The scenery of Northern Serbia is surprisingly like that of the more hilly parts of Great Britain, almost the whole of it consisting of rolling hills covered with timber. The narrow valleys which intervened alone admit of roads and cultivation. The fences which enclose the fields and orchards strengthen the resemblance to England.

In the neighbourhood of Vrn̄tse the people lived in cottages built of brick, rubble, or mud, whitewashed and roofed with red tiles, and the walls were often

painted with geometrical patterns, flower designs, or named portraits of national champions and deliverers (Fig. 28). Further south and west, near the Montenegrin border, we found stone houses roofed with big wooden tiles and without colour decoration, and the open loggias or verandahs, which were so common around us, were seldom to be seen. In the districts taken from Turkey in the Balkan wars the architecture was of the meanest description, houses being either mere wooden booths or ill-planned agglomerations of rubble and stone without beauty of either form or colour. But in all parts the people themselves wore brilliant costumes, and, whatever the background might be, there was never a group of peasants which did not prove the existence of a national liking for bold and original decoration (Fig. 15).

In the north the men wore loose jackets and waistcoats and tight trousers, all of brown or dark blue cloth, and heavily ornamented with black braid. Instead of the cloth waistcoat they often wore one of sheepskin (*bunda*), with the wool inside, brilliantly patched in front with geometrical patterns in coloured leather. Round the waist went one or two belts with the stripes of colour running round the body. The stockings, worn outside the trousers, were generally decorated with a flower pattern, in bright red and pink and green. The one thing which few men except soldiers wore was a weapon. In Montenegro every true-bred Montenegrin carries in his belt a revolver, while Albanians and other inferior peoples go unarmed. The weapon is a symbol of racial aristocracy. Every gentleman "who is a

gentleman " wears this revolver, always loaded and never used, of such length and weight that the strongest man could hardly fire it with any hope of hitting the mark. Apparently it is not intended for use. Wearing a revolver, in fact, is in Montenegro what driving a gig was once in England, merely proof of being a person of honourable parentage, and has nothing to do with courage or truculence. There was nothing of this in Serbia, and no peasant apparently carried anything more formidable than the knife with which he cut his bread and cheese.

The woman's dress was often more splendid than the man's. A coloured kerchief draped her head ; she wore either a sheepskin waistcoat, coloured behind as well as in front, or one of black silk trimmed with gold braid, or, on working days, one of quilted cloth with sleeves ; her skirt was either a plaid, or striped vertically with half a dozen colours, and she often wore a brilliant apron in front of it, and a brilliant petticoat underneath it as well. Her stockings were of the same sort as the man's. Many of these garments were made at home. The stockings were knitted by the women, and every farmer's wife of the better sort possessed a loom on which she wove the belts and skirts and aprons. In the same way she made the wonderful rugs, combining stripes or, more rarely, geometrical forms of daringly contrasted colours, which were used as carpets, as wall decorations, or as blankets and bed covers. For ordinary work the people wore simpler costumes, the men often having in summer nothing but white linen shirts and trousers with a waistcoat and belt. The shirt was then worn outside the trousers. But

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on any festive occasion, with the kerchiefs, the belts, the waistcoats, the skirts, the stockings and the rugs, a group of Serb peasantry presented as dazzling an appearance as could be found anywhere in the world. The richer people, with their fashions fresh from Vienna, were always a sorry contrast. Except that the men never wore silk hats, there was nothing to distinguish the Serb middle and upper classes from those of any country of Western Europe. It is the earnest hope of every lover of beauty that the Westernisation of Serbia may spare the costumes of the peasantry.

Fortunately, so far as this aspect of the country is concerned, Serbia is intensely democratic, and the bulk of the people seem likely for a long time to prefer the simplicity of its own life to the more conventional existence of the West. Wealth is on the whole very evenly distributed, and there is, in consequence, very little of that scrambling imitation of richer folk which is so common and so lamentable elsewhere and does so much to spoil the appearance of the prosperous classes even in Serbia. The great bulk of the population is still composed of peasant proprietors, who preserve the simple standard of living established by their forefathers. The rich man in Serbia, like the seventeenth century Englishman, reckons his wealth in land and cattle, horses and carriages, furniture and plate, and the plutocracy, living on its invested accumulations of capital and deserting native modes of living for cosmopolitan, is almost unknown. Great inequalities therefore do not exist, and in fact many of those who by education or residence abroad have raised themselves

to a higher level of civilisation than the ordinary retain in spirit the primitive simplicity of the race. Cheerfulness, hospitality, patriotism, procrastination, and a disposition to make promises without much intention of performing them are found all over Serbia. Many English people, unable to speak or understand the language, and therefore experiencing little but the slovenliness of officialism, the discomforts of imperfect sanitation, and the pilfering of spare parts of their motor cars, speak with great contempt of Serbians. Those of us who have got deeper into the spirit of the people find in them much to praise and much to love.

The Serb virtue which has been most severely tried and most honourably illustrated in this war is that of patriotism. This quality is deeply rooted in Serbia, as it seems to be in all countries where the actual soil is divided among the people. The little farms containing the houses and supporting the families of the children, as well as of the father of the house, hold the hearts of their proprietors in Serbia as in Russia. The Serb does not speak of "Holy Serbia," but his feeling for his country is as much a religious feeling as among the inhabitants of the great Slav Empire. Alone of the peoples of the Balkans the Serbs themselves direct the policy of their country, and the degree of their influence is proportioned to the intensity of their devotion. Dynastic intrigues, whatever they may have done in the past, have now little power in public affairs, and it would be as impossible for King Peter to sell his people to Austria as it was easy for King Ferdinand to sell the Bulgars. Even after the complete

overthrow of 1915, when everything Serbian except the remnants of the army and a few thousand destitute civilian refugees had been swept into the hands of the enemy, none of the half-starved outcasts was ever heard to suggest a peace with Austria. National independence is to Serbs the same tacitly accepted and exalting idea that it was to Italians in the time of Garibaldi. They hate Austria more than Turkey, because Turkey only scourged their bodies, while Austria has stifled their souls, and the Serb dwellers on Austrian soil look to Serbia as their country just as the Italians of Lombardy looked to Piedmont. There is all the great spirit of the Risorgimento in the Serbian custom which makes it improper to condole with a mother who has lost her son in the war. She is to be congratulated on the honour rather than commiserated on the loss. The people which has established that rule of conduct is a people of very high and very generous temper.

Serbian patriotism, it must be acknowledged, has its little as well as its large aspect. The first Serb Blease ever encountered was a fluent gentleman, who assured him that Italy and Greece and France were all very well in their way, but they had really no care for us, while Serbia had 250,000 of the best soldiers in the world, and would stand by us to the end. Reverence for the national heroes who had saved them from the Turk in the past was mixed with a very genuine conviction that they were themselves very worthy descendants of those heroes. The only foreigner whom we ever heard a Serb acknowledge himself to fear in war was the Bulgar, and the moral effect of the entry of Bulgaria into the war was

obvious and profound. Over all other races they were ready to boast their superiority.

But if the Serbs were vain, it must be stated in fairness that their vanity was national and not personal. We never heard a Serb boast of his own exploits. He would brag of the national heroes, of the great defeat of the Austrians, and of the readiness of Serbia to fight and beat the Germans, Austrians, Roumanians, Greeks, and Italians, but he would never say anything of his own courage or skill, or of the way in which he got his wounds. He took himself as a matter of course. It was his country and his race which filled him with surprise and admiration. Akin to this modesty was an equally striking absence of personal animosity. A Serb would hate Austria, even without knowing much of her constant bullying and thwarting of his country, and he would be bitter enough about the atrocities of the first invasion of 1914. But an individual Austrian could generally be sure of considerate and even friendly treatment at the hands of the ordinary Serb. Austrian wounded lay in the hospital wards with Serb wounded, and we seldom heard of any quarrels. Two violent disputes occurred at the Drzhavna, the first between two Austrian orderlies and the second between two Serb patients. But we had no disturbances of this kind between Serbs and Austrians. The Austrian orderlies were generally on the best of terms with their patients, though a refractory convalescent would occasionally retaliate in a childish way after a reprimand by laying a charge against an orderly. It was, as a rule, only the official and better-educated Serbs who rose to the level of individual antipathies. The simpler folk took even Hungarians, inveterate oppres-

sors of all Slavs, to be men of like nature with themselves. The word "brat," or "brother," came easily to the lips of the peasant, and it was applied as readily to the foreigners whom he had taken in war as to those who had brought hospitals two thousand miles over the sea to help him. Just as it was of Serbia that he bragged, and not of Serbians in particular, so it was Austria that he hated, and not Austrians. The individual in both cases counted for little and the nation for very much.

Next to their patriotism, their kindness of heart, expressed in their unaffected use of the word "brat," was their most conspicuous virtue. Unhappily this did not extend to animals. Of active cruelty we saw very little, but the Serbs did not often make a friend of any animal. They would kick dogs out of mere wantonness, and the savage animals which guarded the farms would be silenced by their masters as often as not by a stone. Dogs always seemed to be disciplined by blows rather than affection. But if he very often failed in his duty towards animals, the Serb was far more ready than Western people to show his affection for mankind. As in all countries where the standard of ordinary life is low, and disease more often mortal than in the West of Europe, death is accepted in Serbia with a resignation that is often not distinguishable from indifference, and the killing of a foreign enemy is never a matter for compunction. An Albanian incursion, for instance, would be repelled and punished without a very strict regard to evidence of individual guilt. This is only the habit of all primitive peasant States. One does not encounter in Serbia any ferocious mutilation of prisoners such as disfigured the last Montenegrin campaign against the Turks, and a

vanquished enemy seems to be treated always with humanity.

The position of women, again, is not very high in Serbia, though they are not such utter beasts of burden as in Montenegro. A Serb out-patient of ours, asked if he would ever beat his wife, exclaimed in surprise : " Why not ? Of course I should, if she wouldn't do what I told her." That is only another expression of the primitive temper of a young community, putting the Serbs about on the level of the English of the seventeenth century ; and if submissiveness of wives was generally enforced by custom, we heard very little of any serious physical ill-treatment.

Within these limits kindness towards individuals is universal in Serbia. When a Serb goes to the war his neighbour steps in to help the wife and children in the management of the farm, and asks for no reward. To the English we found them uniformly grateful, and their hospitality was so lavish as to be embarrassing. A dinner or a picnic with a middle-class family called for prodigious efforts of mastication and digestion. A visit to a farmhouse meant gifts of apples, plums, and mealies. We were lucky if we escaped without an offer of milk, produced in a wooden trough from a wicker-work outhouse, which served the purpose of a henroost as well as a dairy, and tendered to us in a spoon which had reached the farmer's lips before our own. The native " rakija," a kind of brandy distilled on every Northern farm from plums, was dangerous in another way, and we had to shun intoxication as well as typhoid.

Everywhere among the common people we were greeted with affection, and conversation often

became curiously intimate. The peasant would inform us that our teeth were not good, or ask us how much a conspicuous gold crown had cost. He wanted to know how old we were, whether we were married or single, how old our parents were, how many children we had, where we were going, and what we wanted to do when we got there. All this was not in the least an impertinent curiosity, but simply a friendliness, which was not satisfied with any but complete knowledge of the beloved object, and was prepared to make equally frank revelations on its own part. A very simple, egoistic, likeable people indeed: dirty enough, living on mud floors, disliking fresh air, and consequently suffering much from tuberculosis and diphtheria, careless about water supply, and therefore horribly tormented with worms, but always lively and affectionate, delighting in bright colours and wild music, and making a most attractive combination of its characteristic virtues and failings.

The officials of such a race were what we should expect to find. However clean they were, and however spotless their uniforms, many of them remained, in habit of mind, peasants. No reasonable person can doubt the Serb capacity for organisation and discipline, and there is a universal desire for improvement. It has been stated that though many of the older members of the Skupshtina can neither read nor write, they have never refused to vote money for education. Every substantial village has its elementary school. But where the Turk has once been, method and system grow with desperate slowness. The bureaucracy of Serbia is still capable of immense



FIG. 15. SERBIAN PEASANTS AT MARKET.



FIG. 16.—COTTAGES NEAR VRNITSE.



improvement, though the best of what it has already done shows how much it will some day be able to do. Western civilisation is with many of the Serbs still no more than skin-deep—often, it might be said, only uniform deep. No less a person than a general in the Serbian Army once stayed a few days at our hospital. He shared his bedroom with his daughter, a girl of eighteen years of age, as he would have shared it had he been a small farmer. It was common enough to find this mixing of the sexes in middle-class households, and beds might be found in the principal room of a villa opposite to a grand piano, or even in a public room in a Government office. The ordinary boarding-house in Vrnjatchka Banja was divided into a number of small chambers, which were used indiscriminately as living rooms and bedrooms, and even the recently built villas contained no bathrooms. The habit of public expectoration is as common in Serbia as in Italy, but where the Italian conforms to Western standards by exhibiting notices prohibiting it, the Serb frankly recognises it and provides the necessary accommodation. The first notice we had of the coming of the holiday season at the Banja was the huge crop of spittoons, which sprang up one night, like mushrooms, all over the park.

This primitive habit of life persisted in methods of administration. The peasant farmed his land easily and without science, and so long as it produced enough to maintain him and his family he was content. The official worked in the same way in his department, and everywhere there was a want of zeal and thoroughness. One could even get credit

for stamps at the post office. The favourite official word was "sutra," which means "to-morrow." If the impetuous English insisted on "to-day" the official would promise for "to-day," intending perhaps to perform to-morrow, and actually not performing till the day after to-morrow. In these cases the only certain method of securing that he should do his work promptly and completely was personal importunity, urgent and unremitting. We were furnished with one striking example of this superficial performance of duty by no less a person than the Director-General of the Sanitary Service. He visited our hospitals, talked affably to the patients, approved of our arrangements, and never inspected a single latrine until the Professor himself suggested that he should. Sometimes the official would be not only slack, but actually corrupt. Mr. and Mrs. Gordon have recorded how one important personage, with power to provide or refuse transport for hospital stores, was gratified by a present of some sheets. On another occasion a brick merchant, hearing of Mr. Berry's intention to build the new slaughter-house, wrote to the Serb contractor of the works, Mr. Mika Markovitch, offering in plain terms to give him "backsheesh" * if he would procure the contract for the writer. If the brick merchant was not amazingly impudent, there must have been widespread laxity to make such a letter possible.

To this general rule of easy-going there were some conspicuous exceptions. These were often, if not

* It was interesting to see this well-known Turkish word in a Serbian letter; the Serbian language contains many Turkish words.

always, men who had been trained in Western countries, and the best of them could not have been surpassed by any civil service in the world. Dr. Churchin, of the Red Cross service at Kragujevatz, his assistant Mr. Markovitch, and Mr. Ristitch, of the arsenal at the same place, were admirable examples of energetic and painstaking officials. Two others we were fortunate enough to have with us at Vrnjatchka Banja. The military chief of the hospitals, Major Gashitch, was a doctor from Belgrade. He had left his lucrative practice in the capital to live with his wife in a single room at the Banja, and spent most of his days and not a little of his nights in his office. A short, sturdy man with a fierce expression and explosive utterance, he worked with great energy, and, unlike some of his countrymen, regarded it as his paramount duty to further the interests of his hospitals, even in disputes with the Serbian Government itself. His kindness to the English was unfailing, and it contrasted rather comically with his ferocious demeanour. He used to apologise for this manner of his, and attributed it to his Prussian training. The English once witnessed a terrifying exhibition of it. One of our doctors, not yet knowing the Serbs and a little forgetful of the etiquette of a military hospital, was so rash as to report a patient for a series of trifling acts of misconduct directly to the Major himself. The Serb retaliated by laying a charge against an Austrian orderly. If he had thrown his bread at the orderly, it was, he said, because the pig of a man, while giving him his dinner, had put his thumb in the soup. The Major read the Serb a

lecture, and then discharged a torrent of invective upon the unhappy Austrian, who had been guilty, at the worst, of clumsiness. The Major's shouts and stamps frightened the doctor as much as the Austrian, but when the white and trembling youth had disappeared he listened with complete good humour to our representations, and excused the Austrian the flogging which he had promised him. "We Serbs," once confessed a prominent official, "are still half-Oriental"; and there was a ruthlessness in the Major's treatment of subordinates which may have been as much Asiatic as Prussian. But whatever his manner, he was always a straightforward and loyal superior, and no foreign hospital could have found a better friend in official quarters.

Another Serb official whom we learned to respect at Vrnitse was Milutin Jovanovitch, the commissaire of the Drzhavna. He was an Austrian subject, interned for the period of the war, and was in consequence the object of not a little jealousy on the part of those who knew themselves to be Serbs politically as well as by race; the town engineer even went so far as to threaten to undo everything that Jovanovitch had done as soon as the English had gone home again. But Jovanovitch was unquestionably the best servant that our hospitals had in the place. He had been an athlete in his youth, and, though he was now very stout, his energy was still prodigious. No detail was too small, no problem too difficult. He was as enthusiastic over the supply of food for the patients, the making of a drain across the yard, and the purchase of cement for the slaughter-house as he was over the gelatine with which he made copies of documents and the mysterious

chemical with which he erased blots of ink. There was a henhouse attached to the Drzhavna, and he watched over the chickens as jealously as over his patients. Woe betide the wretched orderly who left a gate open and allowed so much as a single bird to escape! Not content with cocks and hens, the commissaire bought some geese, and had a special pen with a puddle in it erected in the hospital yard. There he might be seen leaning on the fence, proudly and affectionately contemplating his little flock and reminding the spectator irresistibly of William the Conqueror, who loved the red deer as if he were their father. He was only half-jesting when he said that if he could get a hippopotamus he would have a perfect zoological garden. It was the same zeal for completeness which made him appropriate everything for the Drzhavna on which he had any decent excuse for laying his hands. At the Atina we needed a table for washing new patients. He designed the table, and had it constructed by the carpenters at the Drzhavna. But when it was finished he was so delighted that he could not let it go. For want of any better place he put it in the operating theatre. It was not a good operating-table, but it was strong and beautifully jointed and in every way a fine piece of workmanship, and accordingly it remained in the Drzhavna.

Jovanovitch was the Professor's right-hand man. There were three other commissaires attached to our Unit, but there was only one identified with it. He was always *the* commissaire. In all Mr. Berry's sanitary projects outside the hospitals, he and Jovanovitch were always together, combating slovenliness and procrastination in high quarters and low.

If the commissaire had any fault, it was that he loved above all things a ceremony. He rolled his tongue round a title as if it were old wine. Mr Berry was always "Herr Professor," the Head Sister "Ober-schwester," and when Blease, during a dearth of trained nurses, acted as night sister at the Drzhavna, he was promptly dubbed "Nachtbruder." If there was a chance of a ceremony he seized it. He once accompanied a picnic party into the hills, and, being unable to climb, secured a pair of wheels drawn by oxen. Securely founded on a truss of hay, and wreathed about with greenery, he rolled along on his improvised chariot like a modern Bacchus. Such frivolities he would ennoble with an address to the "Herr Professor" and the "Frau Professorin," which, for recondite and elaborate language, could not be surpassed at any royal banquet. When the new slaughter-house was to be dedicated, it was Jovanovitch who arranged the order of the proceedings, provided the luncheon, compelled the "Herr Professor" to deliver a speech, and sat up till 2 o'clock in the morning making copies for distribution. All this energy and love of show went with an inexhaustible joviality, and if no one could be more pompous, no one could assume more easily the character of a boon companion. With his wife and baby he seemed the perfect husband and father. He loved his violin, and played the wild native airs of Serbia with great emotion. Blease and two sisters once accompanied him in a carriage to Trstenik. The English occupied the comfortable seat at the back, while his huge form inundated the little board at the front, and they rolled along, he with Blease's leg across his knees, thrumming

it like a guitar, and singing German student songs for two hours without a stop. A strange mixture of pomposity which was never ridiculous and levity which never interfered with business, and delighting equally in his work and the pleasures of society, he was always a valuable assistant and during the period of captivity he showed himself a staunch friend of the English, while loyally serving, as in duty bound, his Austrian masters.

There can be no exact parallels between different races. But the Serbs have very much in common with the Irish. They have the same disposition to enjoy rather than improve life, the same readiness to make the most of the present day and disregard the claims of the future. Superficial cultivation, indifference to dirt, lavish hospitality and impulsive charity are all aspects of this easy temper, which they share with the Irish. Like the Irish, too, they are intensely nationalist in politics, and they have the same passionate devotion to their little plots of land. The parallel holds good even as far as the revival in industry which is taking place in both countries. Scientific agriculture is beginning, even in Serbia, to take the place of primitive methods, and the breeding of better stocks of horses, cattle, and pigs had received much State patronage in the years before the war. Serbs of the type of Gashitch and Jovanovitch might also be compared with those Irishmen who, in other countries than their own, have displayed a capacity for organisation and direction, of which their political adversaries have declared the whole race to be devoid. The parallel, it must be repeated, ought not to be pressed too far. The Irishman, for instance is more

witty, more quarrelsome, more fond of animals, more chivalrous towards women, than the Serb. But any Englishman who made himself master of the language of the country would find himself hardly less at home in Serbia than in many parts of agricultural Ireland. We attempt in this chapter none of those comparisons between the peoples of the Balkans which lead to facile and erroneous political conclusions. We are only concerned to show that, when allowance is made for their poverty and their recent emancipation from the Turk, the Serbs are a people of whose friendship Great Britain has no reason to be ashamed.

W. L. B.

CHAPTER X.

THE OUT-PATIENTS.

Resemblance to the Irish—Quack Remedies—"Dalekos"—
Curiosity—Certain Cure Demanded—Neglected Disease—
Diphtheria—Gratitude of the Serbian Peasants.

"THE out-patients." These are cold, drab words indeed for the sun-bathed, many-coloured, varied-natured crowd which was grouped morning after morning in the courtyard of the Terapia Hospital at Vrintse.

One associates "out-patients" rather with the London slums ; with the English horror of colours ; with the English veneration for self-control (or rather for lack of self-expression !) ; with all the qualities most at war with the spirit of a Serb crowd. Ill they might be—undoubtedly were ; poor many of them—badly fed some ; in real pain—in gnawing anxiety for their dearest ; but cold, drab, dull, never. Always there was response to a smile and little jokes. There was a volubility, an alertness, a power of relaxing into a picturesque attitude in the sun and waiting, practically regardless of time, all characteristic of the nature of the people.

They are like the Irish in their gaiety, their depression, their mercurial temperament ; tears and smiles all a-bubble ; and in their carelessness of money, a real heart-free neglect of it when they have the necessities.

Often we tried to buy skirts and kanitzas (the home-woven waist-belts of gorgeous hues), but the only skirt which was secured by a member of our Unit was one which an Irishwoman chaffed and complimented a woman in a country road into taking off on the spot and giving to her.

This reluctance to sell reminded me of my futile endeavours to buy scarlet homespun skirts in Achill in Ireland, though every woman on the island wore one or more of these desirable garments.

The Unit can hardly be said to have started an out-patient department, for it started itself. You must picture a war-swept agricultural land, the men mostly away, the women and children working the farms; the doctors either in the army, dead of typhus or in battle, or decrepit with age and infirmities. There were a few dug out—obliged for sheer self-preservation to limit their practice to those who could pay ordinary fees. There were no Queen's Nurses, no civil hospitals, no medical officers of health, and no poor-law infirmary. The only free medical advice to be had was that of the herb-sellers at the fairs, where bunches of most of the common wild plants were sold and said to cure all ills. I think that there must be some occult belief associated with these herbs; either they are picked at the full moon or in churchyards, or connected with some allied superstition as in the early days in England. Otherwise it is hard to explain the brisk trade in plants which any peasant could pick outside his own door. They were not prepared in any obvious way. The leaf of a plantain was the great stand-by for all wounds and raw surfaces. It was laid on fresh and green.

I recall one woman coming to me with bright-green lips! She had plantain leaves folded deftly over them as they were swollen and sore, and in her case the leaves served a very practical purpose in protecting the cracked sore lips from the saliva and the sun. She was very pleased at being told that she might keep the leaves if she put my ointment underneath!

This limited and somewhat doubted source of medical help, and perhaps also a certain curiosity and love of a new thing, sent the patients to the foreign units for advice and medicine. When I first got out they used to come in pathetic little groups all day long, and in order to secure any peace, after talking it over with the chief, it was decided to tell them to come at 8 o'clock in the morning. Even then a good sprinkling of patients used to arrive at all hours, and unless they came from very great distances they were sent away to come again next day.

It was remarkable how before long everyone who arrived late was a "daleko"—*i.e.*, "from afar"—and with smiles and gesticulations would explain how they came from "daleko, daleko" and had travelled for hours and hours! Occasionally one caught them out, as with one who, after describing a long, weary journey, told me the name of the village which I happened to know was only just over the hill.

The distance they travelled to get to us was, however, often very great, as much as four, six, or eight hours in an ox wagon over appalling roads, a mode of progression which appeared calculated to dislocate every bone in the human body, and which

would inevitably have led to a painful and lingering death in any English patient suffering as some of them did.

In innocence and ignorance in the early days we urged these patients not to repeat this, to the British mind, terrible experience. But the Serbs are not as other men are : after having their wounds dressed and medicine given them, a few days later, regardless of this advice, the erstwhile half-moribund patients would reappear, smiling and better, for more dressings and medicine. How much was due respectively to the medicine, the cleaning up, the dressings, the mental faith, the hygienic advice as to rest, air and food, the steady wiry constitution of the Serb, the arrest of home-grown methods of cure, it would be impossible to say. The surgeon, of course, said it was cleanliness and faith ; the physicians surmised it was medicines and constitutions ; the out-patient physicians thought it was due to the incomparable skill with which the whole was combined by them ! Certain it is that no live Serb need be despaired of.

One class of patient was very hard to cure. The members of it came up day after day with pain inside, of which very little external evidence could be found. Medicine after medicine proved ineffective, and after a few days they complained that it was a very strange disease they had which they felt convinced could only be revealed by Röntgen rays ! The fame of our X-ray plant had gone far and wide, and, though reluctant to break a bone to test its efficacy for rendering the human form transparent, they had no objection to having an imaginary internal pain ! It was explained to them that the brilliancy of English medical art was

such that all such diseases were understood without resorting to electrical apparatus, and usually the next dose had the desired result !

Experience taught that the physicians should never betray the slightest doubt as to cure. In the case of a man who had run an awl into the palm of his hand and got general blood poisoning, with rigors, abscesses, and very high fever, an acknowledgment of the gravity of the case probably proved fatal. The man's wife was told, in order to make her punctilious about the dressings, probably quite unnecessarily, that if they were not carefully done the man would die. The next day on reaching the house, after a heavy tramp in mud almost to the knees along a typical Serbian lane, laden with dressings, medicines, soups and food, etc., the doctor found the man sitting up in a state of nature, all the dressings on the floor and his wife busily engaged in oiling him all over with a dirty hen's feather !

The discarded practitioner retired, a sadder and a wiser woman. The wife explained that, as there seemed doubt about the English mission cure, she had felt it better to use one which she was told could not fail. It was impossible to resent the poor anxious-faced little wife's action, based as it was upon love, logic, and common sense. Poor things ! So hopeful ! And after the waste of a precious week they lost the only chance the man had, and, although he came to the Red Cross Mission, it was then too late, and he died in two days.

A Serbian physical peculiarity is tenderness in the pit of the stomach. They almost all have it, and it is possibly due to the extreme tightness into which they squeeze their waists from youth up. They wear their

kanitzas tightly wound round, and I have seen a man take off as many as three of these waistbands of about two and a half yards long, and these had been reinforced finally outside by a huge leather strap like the girth of a horse. They carry many possessions in the folds.

There were specimens of almost every known fever amongst the out-patients : measles, small-pox, scarlet fever, rheumatic fever, relapsing fever, malaria, typhus, diphtheria, whooping-cough, tuberculosis. There was practically no enteric, and, oddly enough, much less infantile diarrhoea than might have been expected, possibly because the babies were breast-fed. There was a good deal of ophthalmia, which was said to have been imported by the Turks, as they said also that the Austrians had imported the typhus. If for nothing else, it would have been worth while to have been there for the sake of the children's eyes, many of which were undoubtedly saved from blindness.

The people are intelligent and teachable and have very good memories. What out-patient department here could be safely run with the directions for taking the medicines and treatment all given only by word of mouth ?

The language was certainly something of a difficulty. At first a V.A.D., who was a good linguist and soon picked up Serbian, translated with the occasional help of a Serbian cook who spoke German, but soon the doctors contrived to assimilate enough to do a good deal by themselves and "*tri put svaki dan*" (three times a day), "*chista vazduk*" (fresh air), etc., tripped gaily off their tongues. Now and then a misunderstanding would occur, as with a child who was

given castor oil (a generous amount) for his grandmother and also bismuth and soda with directions. He returned next day asking for more oil and saying that she was much better. It took our united efforts to find out that she had rubbed her stomach with the oil, and begged for more as it was so efficacious !

One of our orderlies, talking to a man in the town, was told that this gentleman was very bored with the dullness of Vrintse this year, there being no bands and amusements, but that he had to come because his wife suffered with "conflagration of the kidneys" and needed the waters !

The work at "out-patients" taught certain lessons. It may well be in England, with all the foolish babble of medicine and disease, with the self-dosing, the interchanging of advice and prescriptions given for entirely separate and different conditions, the hypochondriacs and the quacks, that a pessimistic doubt as to the utility of much of medicine may creep into the heart of the physician—a faint suspicion—(soon banished no doubt) whether the people might not be nearly as well off with no medical profession at all ! Perish the thought ! In Serbia it is seen, spread out plainly, what happens. All the terrible and often thought to be overdrawn pictures of the text-books come to life. Neglected disease seldom seen at all in this country is there comparatively common. No out-patients here would be so rich to the student in "interesting cases." The very list of fevers given above is indication to the thoughtful of the dire need of active medical officers of health. Apropos of this it may be told that perhaps the most lasting and valuable memorial

of Mr. and Mrs. Berry's Mission in Vrnjatchka Banja will undoubtedly be the extraordinary grip it had on the public health of the place. Taking no narrow view of his work, Mr. Berry set to work to improve the general condition of the town as much as possible in the time. He drained a marsh close to the Terapia under considerable opposition both from the retrograde and near-sighted without the Mission, and from the less ambitious within, who found digging in a marsh making drains rather a wide interpretation of V.A.D. work! Nevertheless he persevered, spending hours on the drains himself, and had the satisfaction later of an unsolicited testimonial from a resident in one of the villas in the valley that never before had there been so few mosquitoes and so little malaria. The other public works will no doubt be described elsewhere, but in order to show the conscientious care (to which no doubt we owe the fact that the worst disease from which any member of our staff suffered was a sore throat) with which the Professor worked, I may say that the same detailed thought was given to the out-patients. All the wagons and vehicles which brought patients had to be left on the road fifty yards from our front gate. In the case of those patients who were incapable of walking up to the out-patient room, a matter of 250 yards, the cart was allowed to bring them to the door, deposit them, go away and return when sent for. If there was one who could not be got out of the cart, the patient had to be attended to then and there and sent away. Directly after the out-patients had gone an Austrian orderly swept up all dung from the court-yard. All this was done

in order to avoid any possibility of flies breeding. The flies at Nish, even in the English resthouse, were a terrible pest and danger.

At 8 o'clock in the morning the patients were carefully gone through by Mrs. Gordon, our gifted Serbian-speaking V.A.D., and all cases of probable infection as far as possible put into groups separated from the others. In the case of diphtheria and some others, where undressing was not required, they were seen out of doors, and the diphtheria cases, if refused admission, were given antitoxin on the spot and sent home. The part of the yard where these patients stood and spat was watered with disinfectant!

In one family the distraught mother had lost four children of diphtheria and brought her last two, both stricken, to us. The one who had been first attacked, and was very severely ill on admission, died, but the other, in whom the disease had been acquired one day later, had been brought in time and was saved. On some occasions, if we had a very dirty typhus patient, we had the whole room swabbed well out before we went on, and the place was thoroughly disinfected immediately after out-patients, and also during the day if the "dalekos" were infectious. There was nothing in the room which could not be disinfected. A small cupboard which I succeeded in getting, rather against the grain, from the Professor was only permitted if it stood on well-disinfected legs standing out so that no intelligent louse would face the danger of climbing on to it. The couch was a plain iron frame with three boards instead of wire mattress. These boards were

movable and well scrubbed daily. If the patient was dirty, the boards were scrubbed and turned over for the next one. We had a plain wood table and two chairs and a screen of sheets pinned on a string. I wore a batiste overall tight at the neck and fastening partly at the back, the lower part being stitched up. It had very long sleeves with elastic at the wrists, and I had linen gaiters and shoes. Only once in my three months' work did I catch a louse actually on myself, though I acquired a much-envied notoriety for the rapidity and accuracy with which I could pick lice and fleas off patients while they undressed and transfer the vermin to a bowl of lotion. In order that I may not seem to claim too much for my deftness in this respect, I should own that I had served an apprenticeship years ago in East London.

The Serbs are not as dirty a folk as our own East Enders, but the feeling that each innocent-looking little louse might be a typhus carrier lent a sprightliness and alacrity to my movements which surpassed all London achievements. Their work on the land, in splendid air with plenty of exercise, keeps the Serbs' skin clean and fresh, for no washing is more efficient than that which comes from within, and their home-made coarse linen skirts, frequently washed, serve as mild loofahs. The vermin which they do undoubtedly suffer from are due, I believe, partly to their closed-up houses during the winter cold and also to the fact that they wear almost the same clothes summer and winter and keep the woollen ones for years and years.

One patient we had showed that even in Serbia,

nervous ailments are not unknown. I heard a row in the court and looked out of the window to see a screaming girl tottering in and half-carried, being supported in front and on both sides and behind by willing helpers, another of whom was propping up her head. The diagnosis was clear, and the doctor, dashing out, scattered the patients' helpers like the petals of a rose and, seizing the girl by the hand, ran her rapidly across the court and round the corner. She was so taken by surprise that the shrieks ceased, and she had no time to remember that she could not walk alone, much less run ! She had a good dose and walked home sedately without any assistance. The poor girl had overworked herself nursing a relation and had not been properly fed ; hence the nervous crisis.

The Serbs are a grateful people, and many were the queer little gifts brought daily, from sucking-pigs to a dahlia flower. Rakija, sour milk, cheese, eggs and chickens were often brought. The chickens are carried head downwards by the legs, and are so accustomed to this from their earliest youth, that instead of squawking, they cock their heads at an acute angle and survey the world apparently unperturbed and uninconvenienced by their position. All these tokens we accepted with thanks on behalf of the "Ranyeni Lyudi" (wounded men). Money was also offered and accepted for the Mission, but on hearing it was not for the personal use of the doctor or V.A.D. they sometimes took it back again ! In their gratitude they were often demonstrative after the simple manner of children, meaning no offence, and the unwary might find herself warmly

embraced by the grateful patients or their friends. Although the kindly feeling was welcome, this evidence was less so owing to its being offered in a typhus and diphtheria ridden country, and more might be exchanged under these circumstances than mere feelings !

A. H. B.

CHAPTER XI.

SANITATION AND SIDE-SHOWS.

Sanitation—The Draining of the Marsh—The Street Drain—
The Atina Road—The Refuse Cart—The Dumping Ground—The
Iron Destructor—The Slaughter-House—Laying a Foundation-
Stone—A Prisoners' Camp—Purchase of Cement—Artificial Legs
—Distribution of Boots—Distribution of Clothes—The Actors.

It was always the Professor's desire to do something more in Serbia than merely heal wounds. The greatest advantage which the British peoples possess over the Serbs is not that they are more wise or more skilful, but that they are more clean, and the greatest contribution that they have to make to Serbian civilisation is the idea of organised cleanliness. The Professor, knowing Serbia better than most of the English who went out with hospitals, determined from the first that he would help the bureaucracy in the efforts which they were making to overcome the prevailing indifference to the rules of public health. He never pretended to be much more than an amateur, but in Serbia there is more scope for amateurs than in England. Side by side with our hospital work there went the work of sanitary reform, and some account must be given here of the more important of these enterprises.

The draining of the marsh in front of the Terapia was the earliest of the Mission's experiments in sanitary engineering. It produced much controversy in the Unit. The Professor is certain that it saved the

occupants of the Terapia and the neighbouring villas from mosquitos and malaria. Others declared that he was merely spoiling a very decent little sewage farm. What actually happened is this. The marsh lay directly in front of the Terapia, and in the winter of 1914 was a very dismal and dirty place. No grass would grow on it except at the lower end, where the sewage from the Terapia itself percolated through the soil. The approach to the building cut right across it, and under the stone bridge the little stream had become blocked, flooding back and eventually destroying two other wooden bridges higher up. Above the Terapia bridge was a mass of evil-smelling mud, and below it there was no through drainage. The Professor decided that when the hot weather came all these pools and swampy patches would become mere breeding grounds for mosquitos, and he began drainage operations.

In the face of apathy and even a certain amount of opposition from the local authorities and much scoffing criticism from some members of the Unit, the Professor succeeded in obtaining the services of thirty Austrian prisoners. Armed with shovels, these men set to work, deepened the channel of the stream, and cut several drains into it from the sides. Various members of the Unit in turn superintended the wet, dirty, and noisome business, and Mr. Berry himself was constantly to be seen, wearing huge rubber boots and scrambling through the mud and over the fences with all the enthusiasm of a child making mud pies. But even he was not a professional ditcher, and the final touches were not put to the work until Jones had taken it in hand. Jones had

been something of a farmer, and his long cuts were much more effective than the half-hearted scratches of Blease, his immediate predecessor. The local Serbs gave us but little encouragement, and even the neighbouring farmer at first refused to supply us with wood from his own big stack, when we wanted to rebuild the broken-down bridges. Major Gashitch, independent as usual of all local influences, gave his approval, and the Crown Prince, paying a surprise visit, seemed to be pleased with our efforts. How much benefit we actually produced we cannot of course tell, as we had never seen the marsh in the hot weather. But grass certainly grew where none had grown before, and there were no mosquitos. Most significant of all the signs of change was the silence of the frogs. In the spring the marsh resounded with a medley of croaks, murmurs, and trills, filling the deep, cool night with trembling music, ominously indicative of dampness. But directly the Austrians had finished their work, and the stagnant waters had flowed away, the silence in the marsh was absolute. Whether the frogs had died or migrated we could not tell. But they were never heard again. Nor were there any mosquitos that summer, and the inhabitants of the neighbouring villas declared that it was the first summer in which they had not suffered from malaria.

A second work of the same kind was done in the streets of the town, where we cleaned up the gutter in the main street, diverted the water from the public fountain into it, and constructed one or two drains for the worst of the muddy patches. This was Gordon's idea, and it was carried out by Pokorny,

the Austrian who had built our destructors. It was a useful piece of work, because the rain at Vrnstse was often tropical in volume, and the terrifying thunderstorms, which were so common in June and July, would convert the open spaces into lakes in a few minutes. Parts of the two roads leading to the Terapia we treated in a similar way, cutting out the undergrowth which blocked the ditches and raising or reconstructing the wooden bridges which crossed them. Eleven little wooden bridges in all were built by the Mission in different parts of the town.

Another piece of engineering was undertaken in connection with our occupation of the Atina. When we had pumped out the filthy cesspool and blocked up the old closets we found that more was required before our new dry-earth latrine would be fit for use. Behind the villa, on a slightly higher level, ran a road, which, like most Serb roads, was in a lamentable state of disrepair. It was not only muddy, but tilted to one side, so that all the surface water from the hill above cascaded into our hospital yard and flooded our latrine. When we had filled up the holes in the yard and had given it the slope that was necessary to drain it towards the street, we had to make a new road surface. This was a task of immense difficulty. The stretch of road involved was only about fifty yards long, and there was plenty of material in the bed of the river not far away, but the problem of transporting the material to the road was almost insoluble. Austrian orderlies carried stones in their hands or on a rickety wheelbarrow, but sand for packing the stones could only be carried in a cart, and to get a cart out of the local authorities was almost the most difficult of all the Herr

Professor's tasks. When we did get it we found that it carried hardly more than an ordinary English navvy could have brought in a barrow, and our road was not completed for about six weeks.

While we were making this road a typical experience came in our way. As we drained the water away from the Atina, before the gutter at the side of the road was completed, it ran into the back yard of a house a little further down. One morning the Herr Professor, on his sanitary prowl, discovered a heap of filth deposited on the road at the gate of this yard. A complaint brought out the owner of the house, who protested that the water was running from the road into his "nuzhnik," or manure heap. This "nuzhnik" was nothing more than a corner of his yard, and in order to protect it from the encroachments of our surface drainage he had deposited some of the accumulations of the dirt itself across his gate. It was a characteristic piece of Serbian makeshift, and a long lecture from the Professor on diphtheria produced very little change.

Sanitation in Serbia in fact hardly exists. It was this and many other similar experiences which led Mr. Berry to insist on the provision of a refuse cart for the town. He had to go to the Government at Nish before he could persuade the town engineer to consent to buy the cart. When bought it proved to be an excellent cart, capacious, easily taken to pieces, and easily cleaned; further persuasion and a journey to Trstenik were necessary before it was properly lined with sheets of zinc. But after it had been set to work the bad smells and heaps of rubbish seemed as conspicuous as ever, and Mr. Berry eventually discovered

that the precious engine of sanitary reform was being used to collect dead leaves from the grass in the public park! Similar trouble arose over the big dumping-ground that lay outside the town. The Professor persuaded the authorities to dig trenches, but when the trenches were dug and the refuse was thrown into them they were often left open to the air instead of being filled with earth. It was not until a big iron destructor was sent out to us from England that any systematic burning of the town refuse began. We secured the proper performance of the destruction by training two Austrian prisoners to look after the machine. But even then the perverse ingenuity of the town engineer got in our way, and his precious cart was found to be collecting the mud from the street and carrying it off to be burnt. We could never be quite sure that any system of public health that we established would be maintained. The Serbs required constant inspection, as well as machinery and instructions, and there was one occasion when a bundle of "disinfected" clothes from the town disinfector was opened and a large and lively spider made its appearance from the heart of it. As a rule, however, we could depend on our Austrians. However primitive they might have been at home, they had been well disciplined in their own army, and only a little inspection was needed to keep them up to the required standard.

The most costly and elaborate sanitary work of the Berry Mission was the new slaughter-house which it built for the town. The Professor had three main objects in view when he decided to build it. In the first place, his sanitary feelings were offended by the

existing slaughter-house (Fig. 17). This was nothing but a large wooden shed, standing in muddy ground by the side of the river, and encrusted with the dirt and blood of years. In this loathsome place all the animals required for feeding the town were killed. There were no separate compartments for slaughtering and the hanging of the meat, and a stream of dirty water ran through the building from end to end. Mr. Berry, finding that representations to the police and the municipal authorities produced but very little improvement in the unsatisfactory building—indeed, any adequate improvement of the existing building was out of the question—determined to abolish this characteristic example of Serb indifference to public health. The only way in which the slaughter-house could be made really satisfactory was to pull down the old and to build an entirely new one.

In the second place, towards the end of the summer months at Vrantse, while we were waiting for the new military offensive, we had comparatively little medical work to do, and we had on our hands, in the service of the hospitals, a large number of Austrian prisoners whose time was by no means fully occupied. It seemed a good thing both for Vrantse and for the prisoners themselves that this extra piece of work should be undertaken.

His third motive was the natural desire of the members of the Mission to leave behind them some permanent record of their activities in Vrantse and a permanent object-lesson in sanitation. In the whole of Serbia, we were told, there existed but three modern slaughter-houses.

The slaughter-house therefore occupied a large

share of Mr. Berry's attention during August and September. It was obvious that the cost of the new undertaking ought not to be defrayed out of funds subscribed for hospital purposes. But fortunately, soon after the work was begun, the members of the Liverpool Reform Club subscribed a considerable sum towards the expenses of the Mission, and expressed a desire that part should be applied to some useful object not directly connected with the hospital. This source produced £100. The Professor himself, who had decided not to accept any fees for his work for any private patients in Serbia, applied whatever money he received in that way to the slaughter-house. For the balance he and Mrs. Berry made themselves responsible. The work was done almost entirely by our Austrian staff, among whom were many highly-skilled workmen, thoroughly familiar with the details of building operations. We had several carpenters and masons, bricklayers, a stone-cutter, metal workers of various kinds, and Pokorny, our head mason, who had built our destructors and drains, was a thoroughly trustworthy foreman. All these workmen took the greatest pride and interest in their work.

The plan of the building was as follows, and comprised three main divisions. The first was a lofty square apartment for the actual slaughtering. The walls and floor were to be lined with concrete, and in the centre was a drain.

Beyond this was a second room of similar size in which the flaying and cutting up was to be done, the carcasses being transported from one room to the other by means of a little carriage and large

hook travelling on overhead iron rails. This room was to be provided with a series of large iron hooks round the walls for the temporary hanging of the meat. Other accessories were a stove, a cauldron, and a pump for supplying the large overhead cistern with water.

The third division, for the permanent storage of the meat, was on a deeper level than the rest of the building, and was surrounded by a double wall enclosing a space of seventy centimetres (twenty-eight inches), which could be filled with snow and ice through openings at the top. Within the quadrangle thus formed were six small chambers fitted with hooks, on either side of a central passage. The outer wall of the ice-chamber was very thick, to ensure coolness in the summer months. Overhead was a large loft, the floor of which was of brick and concrete on iron girders. The roof, which unfortunately was never finished, was to have been of wood and tiles, with large louvred openings for free ventilation.

Over the main entrance was to have been an elaborate and beautiful bas-relief of a Serbian ox, designed and modelled in clay by Miss Dickinson. The model was finished, and we had found among our Austrians a professional monumental sculptor who was prepared to execute the work in stone.

The plan of the building was sketched by Jovanovitch, and drawn to scale by Smolik, a Czech architect and prisoner, who was lent to us by our friend the district surveyor at Trstenik. Jovanovitch, who before the war had been the manager of a large iron business in Vienna, was an expert in ironwork, and

had energy and brains enough to make himself master of everything connected with building which he had not known before. He therefore became the Professor's chief helper, travelling about with him to negotiate with officials and buy materials, and visiting the site every day to direct operations. Mika Markovitch, the timber merchant, another good friend of the Mission, provided seasoned timber, and Jones was constantly on the spot to see that the men kept at their work.

Before anything could be done permission had to be obtained from no less than four authorities. These were the township, the district authority at Trstenik, the chief doctor of the baths, Dr. Botta, of Krushevatz, and the Government at Nish, which controlled all Serbian watering-places. Permission was obtained without difficulty, but only after some tedious travelling. The choice of a site was not so easy. The Government would not allow fresh building on the old site, which belonged to the town, and had decided that all future work of that kind should be done on State land only. The town engineer of course declared that there was no other land to be got, and for a time the State and the township were at loggerheads. The Professor pacified the local authorities by a present of a reaping-machine, and a suitable site was found about 500 yards to the north of the old building. The owner was absent on military service, but was fetched home to negotiate for the sale of his plot. He asked two and a half dinars a square metre, which the Professor thought exorbitant and refused to pay. We discovered that an official of the town immediately afterwards

made him a private offer of two and a half dinars, which the owner refused ; but this attempt at a job was frustrated by the dispatch of a Government official from Nish, who bought the land for a price which was never disclosed to us.

When the trenches had been dug and a few courses of stone laid, the foundation-stone was placed in position and the building dedicated, according to the Serbian custom, by a religious ceremony. On a blazing day in August those of us who could leave our work went down, with all the rank and fashion of Vrn̄tse, to see the Princess Alexis Karageorgevitch lay the stone. A group of four priests, clad in the brilliant but tinselly garments of the Greek Church, chanted prayers and responses, read a passage from the Gospels, and delivered a short sermon.

A crucifix was offered for the kisses of the more important members of the congregation, and one of the priests sprinkled us with holy water, shaken from a bunch of herbs. The stone was then duly laid, and Mr. Berry, cumbered with modesty and the difficulties of a foreign language, delivered an address formally presenting the building to the town. Then a young ram was killed, and there followed one of those enormous lunches which accompany all ceremonies in Serbia.

After the choice of site, the next problem was that of water supply. The town engineer said that it was impossible to bring water from the town, so a local well-digger was employed. He dug a well seven metres deep, and lined it from the bottom upwards with unmortared stones, the top being well covered in with cement. Mr. Berry and Jovanovitch discovered

an English force-pump at Krushevatz and a large wine-vat in a farm near Chachak. These furnished us with a constant supply of water and a reservoir. The actual materials for the building were picked up here and there. The lime was brought in ox-wagons from a mountain quarry several miles away. Bricks were bought at various yards, within a radius of three or four miles of Vrantse. The sand was carried in ox-wagons from the Morava, and one day we nearly lost a wagon and two oxen in the river. They had gone across to a small island, and were cut off by a sudden rise of the water. The workmen returned in the evening and reported that the oxen were drowned. Jovanovitch cross-examined them, detected the untruth, and drove off at daybreak to the river, accompanied by a soldier with a rifle. The oxen were then standing up to their necks in water. Jovanovitch ordered some peasants to bring a boat across, but they refused. Then he ordered the soldier to fire in the air, and the peasants surrendered at discretion. The boat was brought, some of the rescuers rowed across and cut the oxen loose from the cart, and Jovanovitch returned in triumph with the rescued beasts, leaving the cart to be swept away. Most of the stone was of excellent quality and came from Orlovatz. The wood was partly obtained in Vrantse itself, where there was a certain amount of seasoned timber. The rest had to be cut from the State forest in the mountains. The Ministry of Agriculture gave the necessary permission. But the official in charge of the department at Nish said that he had no power to make a free grant of wood. The Professor, thoroughly tired by a hot day spent in running from one Ministry to another,



FIG. 17.—THE OLD (EXISTING) SLAUGHTER-HOUSE.



FIG. 18.—THE NEW SLAUGHTER-HOUSE (UNFINISHED), WESTERN END.



shrugged his shoulders and ejaculated, "It seems very difficult to make a present to the Serbian Government," whereupon the official changed his mind. A free grant of 150 trees was made, and an officer of the Department of Forestry went up into the hills to mark the trees.

Then a gang of Austrian prisoners under Josef Jurashinovitch, the Drzhavna carpenter, went up to cut the timber. They had no guard with them and lived in absolute freedom. We sent up food, under-clothing, and soap by ox-wagons. Half the gang slept in the saw-mill of Mika Markovitch and the others under a rough shelter an hour's journey away. After two or three weeks we got the bad news that some of the men had been drinking rakija, and that a quarrel had broken out between them and the neighbouring peasants. We therefore sent up a gendarme to keep order. Under the circumstances, the Professor determined to pay a personal visit, and a party set out from the Terapia, including Blease, who was to be left behind, if necessary, to see fair play between the gendarme and the prisoners.

The hills which roll up from the valley at this point are for the most part covered with thick forest, though the highest summit, Gotch, is quite bare. The track winds up through the woods to a height of something under 4,000 feet. On the lower slopes the trees are oak, but above they are beech, and it is not until the crest of the ridge has been passed that the pines begin. On the actual crest there is a stretch of open park land, with three gigantic oaks by the side of the road, and a magnificent view over the billowy foliage of the lower hills and across the Morava valley towards Kragujevatz. The path to the saw-mill runs past the two or

three scattered houses which represent the village of Gotch, and the saw-mill lies in a densely wooded glen on the southern side. It is a rambling wooden structure overshadowed by gigantic trees, and a black earth track passes through groves of beech 100 feet high to the slope on which the woodmen had fixed their camp.

The story of the quarrel fortunately proved to be exaggerated, and we found the gendarme and the prisoners all living together on friendly terms. Nevertheless, as Blease had come up equipped with the camp bed of one member of the Unit, the sleeping bag of another, and the cooking equipment of a third, and prepared for all the hardships and excitements of a life in the woods, it was decided that he should remain for a few days. The rest of the party went off in the dark and left him at the saw-mill. There he spent four days and nights. Six of the Austrians slept in the forest by their work, under a rough shelter of boughs and leaves. Six others and the gendarme slept with Blease at the mill, sharing the single room, the rickety verandah, and the stable attached to it. The gendarme slept in the room, Blease on the verandah, and the prisoners in the stable. It required much persuasion to induce the gendarme to consent to this arrangement, and he retaliated by insisting on pulling Blease's boots off and piling the blankets on him before retiring himself to rest. Each morning at daybreak the others tramped away to work, while Blease stayed behind and wrestled with the problems of breakfast. Then he followed the men through the echoing forest, guiding himself at last by the sound of the axe and the saw. His work was light enough,

and he had little to do but listen to requests for more food and clean clothes to be brought up in the next wagon. The gendarme was equally idle, but the men worked steadily, Josef marking out the logs in red and four others cutting them into planks with a huge saw, one standing on the log and three working from below. After four days Blease came down to earth again. In about six weeks all the planks were sawn, and about half had been brought down and made ready for the roof, when the arrival of fresh wounded compelled the withdrawal of many of the workmen to the hospitals. The increasing difficulty of getting ox-wagons further hindered the progress of the building operations, and the roof was never finished.

The purchase of cement, of which a large quantity was needed, was made in much the same way as that of the other materials. A letter to a well-known cement company in the north of Serbia elicited the reply that all their stock had been requisitioned for Government use.

At Vrnstse cement could be bought only at the prohibitive price of 25 dinars per 100 kilos, and there was very little to be had even at that price. Then the Professor and Jovanovitch heard of some at Krushevatz which was offered at 16 dinars. Mr. Berry was inclined to accept these terms, but Jovanovitch persuaded him to wait, as he had heard from our friend the district surveyor at Trstenik, Mr. Pera Popovitch, that the Franco-Serbian Railway Company had a large stock at Kraljevo which they would probably be willing to sell. So we telephoned to the municipal authorities at this town, but they said they knew nothing of any cement there. Not satisfied,

Jovanovitch and the Professor on the following day drove over to Kraljevo, taking with them the Mayor of Vrantse. Again the Mayor of Kraljevo appeared to be innocent of any knowledge of cement. "But," said the visitors, "is there not here a Franco-Serbian company and a Russian engineer, Mr. K——?" "Certainly." Mr. K—— was sent for, and directly he entered the room and before he had time to communicate with anyone else Jovanovitch said to him, "Have you any cement to sell?" "Oh, yes, we have plenty at our magazine a mile away," was the reply. Mr. K—— was forthwith driven off to the magazine, where cement of excellent quality was found. An adjournment to a neighbouring café was made, a contract was drawn up and signed, and in a quarter of an hour we were the possessors of 10,000 kilos of cement, which Mr. K—— kindly allowed us to buy at the price the company itself had paid for it, namely, 755 dinars, less than a third of the price asked at Vrantse. We subsequently obtained from the same source another 5,000 kilos at the same price.

We never fathomed the reasons why the authorities of Kraljevo had been so reluctant to give us the information we wanted, but we think that they had probably received orders to hold all cement for some other purpose.

It was the same Mr. K—— who afterwards, with the permission of his courteous chief at Nish, helped us to obtain some huge iron girders of which we were in need. To get these, however, a Government requisition order had to be obtained. This was readily granted, but another amusing and interesting

day had to be spent in meeting the military commission, who had to sit on the girders at Kraljevo before they could be yielded up.

The whole business of building the slaughter-house had been very much delayed, chiefly by the difficulty of procuring transport for materials. Even Jovanovitch could not get ox-wagons when there were none to be had. The result was that a building which ought to have been finished in six weeks was unfortunately still without floor or roof when the Austrians entered the town (Fig. 18). Everything else was practically complete. What has become of the incomplete building and the unused materials we do not know. Most of the wood had been carried away before the Mission left for England, and the Austrians would probably appropriate the iron and cement. But we still cling to the hope that after the war the building will be finished and not suffered to remain a mere empty shell.

Apart from sanitation, we had other kinds of work to do which may be conveniently grouped together under the title of "side-shows." Thus we had great difficulty in providing for men who had lost legs or feet. One or two artificial legs came out from England, but they had been made to fit special cases, and it seemed wasteful to alter them for others. The manufacture of legs of our own was, on the other hand, not at all easy, because leather, which forms a large part of all these artificial limbs, was very expensive, and the elaborate fitting of the leather to the stump required workmanship of the most skilled kind. We had to fall back on beechwood, iron and flannel bandages, with an occasional strap. Giuseppe

Silla, the Italian carpenter from Trieste, confessed to a "passion" for contrivances of this sort in wood, and the inventive Szilagyi, our electrician and metal worker, provided iron joints and hinges. Blease, who began in complete ignorance of the work, was the designer-in-chief, and picked up ideas as he went along. We advanced by degrees from mere stumps, which supplied the places of amputated feet, to a leg with a knee-joint. There are eight or ten men, Serbs and Austrians, now stumping about the country on legs of our manufacture. The more elaborate of our designs would no doubt excite the derision of any regular instrument-maker. But we feel nevertheless that, with our inadequate materials, to enable a man with a leg and a half to walk and work without the aid of a crutch was a very creditable performance.

Almost the most melancholy of all our duties was the distribution of boots. Serbia is one of the muddiest countries in Europe, and the native shoe is less suitable for walking in mud than that of any other country except Albania. The Serbian opanka is made of leather. It covers the toes fairly well, but the bulk of the foot rests on a flat sole with a rim about an inch deep, and any water or mud of greater depth penetrates at once through the stocking and inundates the whole foot. To a people accustomed to such shoes a real boot is a god-send, and it was seldom that a peasant or a soldier failed to ask the price of our boots if he had more than a minute's conversation with us. From time to time cases of boots reached us from England, originally destined for discharged patients. But the news of the arrival

of one of them drew upon us applications from all sorts of people. Our own Austrian prisoners we shod as a matter of course. Then orderlies from other hospitals, our own commissaires, the station-master, the police, members of a travelling orchestra, even officers in the army, begged for boots. There are very few tanneries in Serbia, and consequently leather was very scarce ; it cost fifteen dinars to sole and heel a single pair of boots ; and the reason why we could never open the windows of the railway carriages was that all the straps had been cut away by the soldiers to repair their footgear. In these circumstances those who had charge of the limited store of boots had a very painful duty to perform. To refuse the appeal of a man with his feet wrapped in soaking cloth, merely because he was the orderly of another hospital, or a civilian Serb with no claims upon us, required a great effort. But to give way was to invite a swarm of fresh applicants, each of them as hard a case as the first. Mr. Berry and Blease were often reduced to treating the matter in the style of Spenlow and Jorkins. The Professor would evade responsibility by referring the applicant to Blease, who, in his turn, would ascribe his inability to grant the request to the rigid instructions of the Herr Professor. Neither took any pleasure in discriminating, but the supplies were rapidly becoming exhausted, and the only safe rule was to give boots only to those who actually worked for our own hospitals.

Clothes presented by no means such a difficult problem. We had large stocks of civilian suits, useless for military patients, but invaluable for civilians and

Austrian orderlies. Sometimes we would equip a coachman, or even a commissaire. But there were a number of elaborate garments for which we were at first unable to find any use. Even Jovanovitch could not provide for twenty morning coats with tails, or for more than a couple of double-breasted waistcoats. These more gorgeous garments therefore lay neglected in our store-room. At length we succeeded in getting rid of them. There appeared in Vrnjatchka Banja a company of actors, who heard, like everybody else, that there were clothes at the Terapia. A "walking gentleman" carried off one suit, and before long we had got rid of a dozen. A comedian was even good enough to relieve us of some violently patterned check waistcoats, obviously intended for a stage bookmaker. Thus we disposed of a mass of clothing, all useless for men who did manual labour, and some of it in a style in which even a prisoner would have been ashamed to be found dead.

W. L. B.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SUMMER MONTHS.

End of Typhus and subsequent Slackness of Hospital Work—Changes in the Unit—Difficulty of Amusement in Vrnitse—Gordon's Banjo—The Theatre—Excursions—Miss Reckitt's Car—Peripatetic Medicine Men—Roads in Serbia—"Kuku-Mene"—The Terapia Drains—Reasons for remaining in Serbia—Letters from Commander-in-Chief and Crown Prince—Civil Surgery—John Willy—The indiscreet English Doctor.

By the end of April, when our efforts, combined with the fine weather and the resumption of an open-air life by the people, had put an end to typhus in Vrnitse, we found ourselves with less medical and surgical work than sufficed to employ our energies to the full. Only three or four batches of wounded came, all evacuated from other hospitals, and, as there was no fighting of any serious kind until the autumn, the late spring and summer were chiefly occupied with the sanitary work described in the last chapter, and the medical and surgical work was rather humdrum, our civil patients providing us with most of our fresh interest. Under these circumstances many members of the Unit began to have leisure to amuse themselves, and we were made not a little uncomfortable by reading in English newspapers of the horrors and dangers which we were supposed to be still facing. In fact, the tales of the bad times in Serbia continued to appear for at least two months after the bad times had come to an end, and only the original members of the Unit experienced any real hardships or were exposed to any serious

dangers from disease. That these original members suffered nothing worse than one mildly septic throat between them is a fact on which they may justly flatter themselves ; they avoided real perils by taking proper precautions. Later arrivals were never at any time in such danger as faced all the foreign missions who were surprised by the first onset of the typhus epidemic. The members of the original mission had all enlisted for a minimum period of three months, and when this was over a gradual disintegration of the Unit set in, accompanied by infusion of fresh blood. By June 9th all the medical staff had gone home except the two heads of the Unit, all the sisters except one, Sister West, and all the orderlies, men and women, except Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Eldred, and Mr. Gwin. The first new arrivals were a party of six, four sisters and a V.A.D., Miss Barber, under the escort of Mr. Blease. One of the sisters, Miss Harriott Davies, became Sister-in-charge on Sister Robertson's departure. The next reinforcement was received in May, when Miss A. J. Dickinson joined the Mission to undertake the supervision of the housekeeping, stores and kitchen. She was accompanied by Miss Margaret Hyett, V.A.D., and Miss Mabel Ingram, medical student. The latter, although not yet in the third year of her medical studies, knew a good deal about electricity, and, after some tuition from Dr. Williams, was able, on his departure, to take on the X-ray department, which she ran with much credit to herself and to the Mission during the remainder of our stay at Vrnstse.

Dr. Helen Boyle arrived shortly afterwards with two lady orderlies, Miss Thackeray and Miss Walters ; the former proved most useful as a masseuse, and the

latter brought her little Humberette car, referred to later. Dr. Boyle, besides a Ford motor car, also mentioned later, was bringing a most useful contribution in the shape of a Thresh steam disinfector, but this, through some confusion, was left on the boat at Salonica, whence it went on a prolonged Mediterranean tour, sojourning *en route* at Alexandria and Malta, and not arriving at Vrintse till September. In June another party of ten arrived, consisting of Dr. Ada McLaren and Dr. Isobel Inglis, with five sisters, two lady orderlies, and one gentleman ditto, Mr. Herbert Jones. By August the Unit had assumed the form which it retained until a few days before the enemy entered Vrintse, except that two lady orderlies in the last party left and two additional members arrived in September. The latter were Miss Ria Murray, V.A.D., and Dr. J. B. Christopherson, who holds the important post of Director of Civil Hospitals at Khartoum, and is an old friend of the Professor. Having obtained two months' leave of absence, he, with characteristic energy, offered his services to the Mission and came over to help in its work.

At one point during the changes, in the early part of the summer, we were actually under-staffed, and for nine nights an English orderly had to act as night sister at the Drzhavna,* though the fleas gave him infinitely more trouble than the patients. The actual hospital work from April till September was never great, and it was easy to arrange for two or three hours of freedom daily for all but a few members of the Unit. Our leisure time during this period of

* The Drzhavna was now again under our sole control and was no longer run jointly by the two British missions, as it had been during the earlier months when typhus was prevalent.

comparative inactivity was occupied in various ways. It was not easy to amuse ourselves in Vrn̄tse, and no holiday resort ever offered so few facilities for indulgence or extravagance. There were very good cakes* and coffee in the restaurants; but the wine was poor and beer hardly ever to be seen; so that if we had wanted dissipation the native rakija afforded almost the only means of getting it. When we add that an orange cost 6*d.* and a lemon 4*d.* it will be understood that we were seldom tempted to indulge to excess, at any rate at our own expense, in the pleasures of the table. There was hardly greater opportunity for more refined occupations. We had no piano at the Terapia, and as we had most of us come out prepared for hardships and perpetual labour, with no time for recreation, we could only muster a handful of books between us. Fortunately we had plenty of newspapers sent from home. Gordon's banjo and melodious howlings provided us with most of our music, and never did such an extraordinary collection of nigger melodies, music-hall songs, and reminiscences of annual dinners of the Ancient Order of Buffaloes receive such patient attention and such unstinted applause. One *al fresco* rendering of "Pherson's Feud" to a mixed audience of Serbs and British will remain an abiding memory with all of us, and what the Serbs thought of it as an ancient Scottish war song they could hardly express in words. We had three days of more

* These cakes were very good and of many varieties. The Serbs knew nothing of biscuits, and the plainest English biscuit was a treat to them. But one patient presented with some biscuit and jam calmly licked the jam off the biscuit and threw the latter on to the floor. He said he thought it was a piece of wood!

serious music when the travelling orchestra came from Nish. This was the only public entertainment provided in the town during our stay, and for the most part we had to use our own resources. There was no cinema nearer than Skoplje, and the serious drama we could not understand. Our gifts of clothes to the actors in fact brought us in touch with the Serbian stage. The theatre was erected in the garden of a café, and the performance began after dinner. Only one of the season's plays was familiar to us. It was "Sherlock Holmes." But the English classic was presented when we were hard at work again, and none of us went to see it. On the two or three nights when we were present the plays were apparently commonplace melodrama, and we did not, and could not, take very much interest in them. The theatre was in fact merely an excuse for dining out, and on the only occasion on which Mr. Berry himself was there he was obviously struggling with sleep rather than improving his knowledge of the Serbian tongue. The others confined themselves to admiring the prompter. He sat in a box at the front of the stage, repeating in a very loud voice every word of every part, so that, if we had understood anything that was said, we should have enjoyed a reading and a performance of the play simultaneously. As it was we recognised an occasional word with a sort of suppressed cheer, and every time that a person on the stage said "Good-day" or "Good-night" or repeated the blessed word "dobro" (good), which was the one word that every English person knew, we felt that we were really entering into the spirit of the piece. The theatre was of very little use to us, and

if we wanted recreation we were obliged to look elsewhere. As a rule we contented ourselves with walks up the hills or along the valley behind the Terapia. In one of the rivers we could get a swim (Fig. 20). Once or twice there were gargantuan picnics at Miritch's mill by the Morava or Markovitch's house beyond the crest of Gotch. Some of the members of the Unit enjoyed riding, and they could sometimes get a horse or two from the town. On these excursions we seldom failed to meet would-be patients, who almost always insisted on an immediate consultation, and would reduce themselves to an embarrassing state of nudity by the wayside before we could tell them to come to the Terapia at the proper hour next day. There was one occasion when the Professor worked cures wholesale, riding up into a village in the mountains with four bottles of pills, which he dealt out to all who complained of feeling unwell. It was of course hopeless to try and attend medical cases which could not be brought to the hospital, and a little quackery of this sort could do no harm. Occasionally, when we could obtain transport, we ventured further afield. One party borrowed a trolley from the polite but unsympathetic station-master, who could not understand why these rich English should work so hard in the heat. On this they went down the line to Kraljevo, and then walked to the neighbouring monastery of Zitcha. Here was the ancient coronation church, in which damaged but brilliantly coloured frescoes recalled the glories of Stefan Nemanja (twelfth and thirteenth centuries) and Dushan (fourteenth century) in the days before the devastating heel of the Turk was set

upon the land. More often we were provided with the major's carriage, a big wagonette drawn by a large young brown horse and a little old grey. This equipage could take us as far as Trstenik. Sometimes we went there only for shopping. But if we wished we could go a few miles further to the monastery of Ljubostinja and drink wine or coffee among the beehives with the old white-bearded priest. The monastery lies in a valley, which branches to the north from that of the Western Morava. After the death of Lazar, the last of the Serbian Tsars, on the field of Kossovo in A.D. 1389, his widow Militsa spent the remaining years of her life in this place, where her tomb is still to be seen. She was a benefactress of the monastery, but the story that she founded it is probably not correct. She was a sister of the nine famous Jugovitches, who perished with their Tsar at Kossovo, and descendants of the family still live at Trstenik. Mr. Berry found one of them in the person of an official of the town, and an apposite quotation from one of the national ballads made him our friend for life.

When we had a motor at our disposal we could go as far as Nish or Kragujevatz, and when one of us went on business others generally accompanied him for pleasure. The railway ran to both places, but by circuitous routes, and, as only one train left Vrnstse in a day, a few hours of the night had always to be spent at the junction of Stalatch. Accordingly we preferred the car. At first we had none, but in April we succeeded in borrowing a small Renault from the Franco-Serbian company at Kraljevo. We returned this after a month or two, about the same

time that Miss Thackeray and Dr. Boyle brought the new Ford car kindly presented to the Mission by Miss Reckitt, of Hove. The Ford had shed all its spare parts and removable gear in the station yard at Nish, and it was some time before it was in working order: even sparking-plugs had been extracted. But after substitutes for the missing parts had been obtained from the arsenal at Kragujevatz it proved an admirable car for its purpose, and its combination of strength, lightness, and high clearance made it much more useful for long journeys and bad roads than the little low Humberette brought by Miss Walters. It suffered one or two slight injuries, which were repaired free of charge at the arsenal, and the only serious disaster occurred when an official at Krushevatz took it out for a "joy ride" and sent himself and his passengers into hospital and the car itself to the repair shop. Although he sometimes used the Humberette for his daily tours about the town, the Ford was the Professor's business car, and his frequent journeys to Nish and Kragujevatz were by its aid made much shorter and infinitely more pleasant. On one of these journeys to Kragujevatz Mr. Berry and Sister Hammond were visiting an anti-aircraft battery at the moment when Austrian aeroplanes attacked the arsenal. Gordon was actually in the arsenal when the bombs fell, and a man was killed close to him.* But as a rule our expeditions were made without any adventures, and the greatest excitements were provided by the condition of the roads.

* This and other adventures are described in Mr. and Mrs. Gordon's book, "The Luck of Thirteen": Smith, Elder & Co., 1915.



FIG. 19.—A SERBIAN MILITARY CAMP.



FIG. 20.—THE WESTERN MORAVA RIVER.

The roads of Serbia, though no worse than those of other Balkan States, are very unlike those of Western Europe, and the vehicles which run on them are as remarkable as the roads themselves. The Serbian carriage is the typical carriage of the Balkans, and every example looks as if it dated from the reign of Maria Theresia, to whom its design is ascribed. It is rather like an enlarged bath-chair with a little board in front, so that one or two people can sit with their backs to the driver, and it is always in a state of dilapidation. If anything does give way during a journey, the break is mended with cord of the thickness of clothes line. If a wheel comes off and cannot be replaced, a small log is fixed in its place and acts like the runner of a sledge. There are two horses, obviously not intended to run together in harness, and safety is only secured by the slow rate of progression. The roads are often good, though it is a common experience to find a road which begins well, suddenly disappearing altogether, and leaving the car to bump over bare rock or labour through dust or mud. The best of the valley roads are wide, and, though there is no macadam on the surface, the foundation is often hard enough. It is only when rain falls that any difficulty is encountered on these roads, though the effects of rain sometimes endure for weeks after the fine weather has returned. The whole of the dusty surface is then converted into liquid mud, and as there is no crowning this never runs to one side. In the towns there is some attempt at clearing it away, unless the streets are paved with stone blocks which allow it to sink into the interstices between them. But in places like Vrnitse,

where the streets are unpaved, the method of cleaning was to scrape the mud off the road into the ditch, so that even such drainage as existed was soon blocked and the last state of the roads was worse than the first. Here and there on all these tracks hollows are completely filled with mud and the wheels of a vehicle plunge in to the depth of a foot or more. This mud is sometimes made beautiful in a very strange way; there is a species of blue butterfly which used to alight on it in great bunches, and on one journey to Kragujevatz our car was continually coming upon them and seeming to splash up a sapphire cloud of blue butterflies as well as the filthy mud itself. Occasionally the car would stick fast in the worst places (Fig. 14), and the passengers would have to get out and push or pull down a fence to lay timber in front of the wheels. On one expedition the Professor and the Frau Doktor were pulled out of the mud three times, the first by men, the second by two oxen, and the third by four oxen, and they were so delayed that they had to spend the night on the high road. On subsequent journeys they always took sleeping bags with them. Once or twice the car stuck in a ford, or found a river where there should have been nothing but road. Another obstacle was the drain which occasionally ran across even a good road, invisible at a distance and suddenly leaping out of the dust to give the car a frightful jolt. Every bridge provided two channels of this kind, where the road surface ended and the planks began. A long journey would thus furnish plenty of excitement. The only thing which did not seriously trouble us was the traffic.

We seldom encountered anything worse than a bullock-cart, and the bullock-cart always did one or other of two things: it either fled from us at a great distance, the occupants leaping to the ground and pushing and banging at the oxen long before there was any need to move at all, or it waited until we were right upon it and then ran headlong into the ditch, shedding its passengers and cargo as it went. On one occasion the agile oxen varied the performance by climbing a steep bank about four feet high. In any case, everything deserted the road for the adjacent ditch or field and gave us no trouble.

One of our more frequent experiences was what we used to call the "kuku-mene" in the cemeteries. The "kuku-mene" (woe is me) forms the burden of the wailing for the dead which is practised in Serbia. One day in every week, usually Saturday, is set apart for the ceremony, and on that day the women of the family, sometimes with one or two men, take their station about the grave, cover it with food and drink and lighted candles, and work themselves up into hysterical weeping, which continues for hours. The cemeteries are picturesque places. That of Vrnjatchka Banja lies on the top of a hill in view of the Terapia, and when the wind set from there we could hear the shrill lamentation without going out of our own garden. Other cemeteries lay among the fields, sometimes entirely hidden by the crops of maize. Some graves were marked with plain wooden crosses, others with stones, and over some hung tattered banners fluttering in the breeze. It was quite common for the English, when walking about the country, to hear the wild crying

borne upon the wind and, turning aside into the cemetery, find the women crouched about the flickering candles, weeping and wailing, and then to be pressed to partake of fruit, or maize bread, or trout, or rakija, and to offer prayers for the soul of the departed. The bulk of the food is always distributed to the poor, and we have seen the Austrian prisoners who acted as grave-diggers called up to receive this charity from the hands of their enemies and captors.

One of our summer adventures was anything but amusing. The Terapia, for all its imposing appearance, was not a very solid building, and such parts as the brick and stucco cornices at the outside were in a state of gradual but persistent decay. The worst fault we did not discover until the summer. The baths on the ground floor discharged into a set of seventeen drain-pipes, which ran through a tunnel under the floor of the corridor. These pipes, of inferior earthenware, were carried on brick supports, instead of being firmly embedded in concrete. Workmen, in laying or repairing the drains, had stepped on them at various points, and no less than sixteen of them were broken in one place or more when the building came into our hands. The result may be imagined. When our Austrian masons and bricklayers had finished the work of reconstruction no less than 300 buckets of mud had been taken from the tunnels.

It must not be supposed that the lack of hard work which affected most of the Unit during the months of June, July, and August was accepted by any of them without dissatisfaction. There was plenty of grumbling and an excessive readiness to vent displeasure

upon the head of the Professor, as if he were responsible for the sluggishness of the Austrian General Staff. It was with some difficulty that fresh members of the Unit, whose terms of service had expired, were induced to remain in Serbia. But the case was not so simple as it appeared. Mr. Berry more than once warned the Unit that wounded might come soon, and on each occasion, though some people spoke as if he had been guilty of wilful deception, he was acting upon estimates properly made by the Serbian military authorities. At one time a large force, which had actually been set in motion towards the Serbian frontier, was diverted to the Carpathians to cope with the advancing Russians. But all through the summer the Serbs knew that they might be attacked at any moment, and they were determined that a fresh invasion should not find them unprepared. They therefore begged all foreign hospital missions to remain in the country. The Berry Unit, like most of the others, complained and obeyed, longing for the larger opportunities of others in France, Gallipoli, and Italy. The crash that followed in the autumn abolished the occasion to chafe at inactivity, and six arduous weeks satisfied them of the rightness of the Serbian dispositions. The following letters were written in order to induce the mission to remain :—

“MILITARY HEADQUARTERS MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

“(No. 17173).

“To the Chief of the English Medical Mission, Prof. Dr.
James Berry.

“The head of the Reserve Hospital in Vrnitse has informed me that the period of service of your mission terminates at the end of May. In sending you the accompanying communi-

cation from the Commander-in-Chief acknowledging all the trouble you and your mission have taken with our wounded and sick, I take the opportunity of asking the Committee* that sent you to work in Serbia, to allow your mission to remain longer in our country, to which you have already done such good service and to which, if military operations begin again, you will now be of immense value.

"I take this opportunity of assuring you of the most complete satisfaction which I felt when I visited your hospitals in Vrnitse.

" (Signed) COLONEL DR. LAZAR GENTCHITCH,

"Head of the Army Medical Department.

"Kragujevatz, May 13-26, 1915."

(Copy of letter from the Crown Prince of Serbia circulated to the various British missions in Serbia.)

"Kragouievatz, July 16-29, 1915.

"Dear Sir Ralph,—Appreciating the great services rendered by all British Units in Serbia who have been doing their noble duty so devotedly and indefatigably, I wish to express to them my own and my people's sincere gratitude.

"Persuaded that their fruitful work is still necessary to my Army as well as to my people, I hope that they will be able to remain with us yet awhile and that the day of their departure from Serbia may be far distant.

"Yours very sincerely,

" (Signed) ALEXANDER.

"Sir Ralph Paget, K.C.M.G., Nish."

Appeals of this sort could not be resisted, and we stayed in Serbia, although many of us showed little readiness to believe that "they also serve who only stand and wait." The Professor himself showed his own dissatisfaction at having so little military surgery by indulging in civil practice. At first he had refused

* A slight error here. We were not sent by any committee, but ourselves appointed a committee.—J. B.

to occupy the beds with civilians unless their needs were urgent, but as it became more probable that there would be no freshly-wounded soldiers for some time to come, we gradually admitted the civilians—men, women, and children—more and more freely. Three tracheotomies, half-a-dozen hernias, a hand torn in a machine, an artery in the foot cut with a sickle, an arm badly broken by an ox-cart, and several cases of tumours, tuberculous bones and joints, provided some miscellaneous practice, and most of these civilian surgical cases did very well. The medical cases were not quite so satisfactory, as so many were cases of tuberculosis and digestive troubles, which required dieting, fresh air, and residence in special conditions rather than drugs. Some of these were sent to the Baraque, and several unhappy children were relieved of the intestinal worms which either caused or aggravated their symptoms. The work among the out-patients has been described already.

One of the most pathetic of these civil cases was that of "John Willy"; his real name we forget, if we ever knew it. He was a boy of thirteen or fourteen and one of the many cases of parasitic disease contracted through drinking bad water. Most of these children had worms; he had the other form, that of hydatid cyst, and the growth was removed by operation. For long enough he lay in the ward at the Terapia, having his wound dressed every day, and crying "Yoi, yoi!" as pitifully as any stricken soldier. He grew steadily better and began to walk about the ward—a lad in a man's coat and pyjamas and wearing an enormous straw hat, beneath which his face seemed nothing but two enormous eyes and a wistful smile. He was on

the point of going home when he became seriously ill with peritonitis, and in a few days he was dead. No other patient left us with such a sense of deprivation. We had been waiting only for bright sunlight to take a photograph of him before he went home, and it was on the finest of the fine days that he died. There was an Austrian prisoner who always came with a bullock-cart to carry away the dead soldiers. He came by mistake when "John Willy" died, and, going into the mortuary, found, instead of the man he expected, the slight figure of the boy laid on the table with a spray of oak leaves on his breast. It was the only occasion on which the Austrian was ever seen to be moved by the duties of his office, and the tears were running down his cheek as he drove the empty cart away.

Another civilian patient provided us with comedy rather than pathos. Over him there was an encounter between an English and a Serb doctor which seems worthy of record, though the names, for various reasons, are suppressed. The Englishman, who was justifiably self-confident, but rather too sensitive, had charge of a bad typhoid case. The patient was a young Serb of good family, and his mother and sisters were continually coming in great distress to the hospital where he lay, and worried the doctor to distraction. The Serbian doctor, a connection by marriage, made the thing worse by suggesting remedies and offended the Englishman's professional dignity, in addition to making him nervous and irritable by mere importunity. The climax came when a dignitary appeared, without notice and in the absence of the English doctor, and tried to force his way into the patient's bedroom with two other personages, no less

important than the medical advisers of the King and the Crown Prince. The news of this high-handed proceeding produced a violent explosion from the Englishman when he returned, and the layman was persuaded to apologise for his conduct. But the two doctors asked for permission to see the patient, and it was granted. As the English doctor could speak only English, interpreters had to be provided, and the negotiations were carried on in French by the patient's brother-in-law and an English volunteer orderly. But for this the English doctor would have got himself into trouble. On hearing that the King took such a deep interest in the young man that he had sent his own doctor to see how he was progressing, all his accumulated resentment came to the explosion point. He was the doctor in charge, and for a fortnight he had been beset with mother and sisters and brother-in-law and doctors, and now there was the King. He leaped into the air and beat his right fist in his left palm: "D—— the King! D—— the King! D—— the King!" he cried. "What does he say?" asked the puzzled Serb. "He says," glibly replied the English interpreter, "that in his own hospital the English doctor is king." If the art of the diplomat is to state offensive things in an inoffensive manner, that paraphrase was a diplomatic masterpiece. The English doctor is probably unaware to this day how he was saved from the penalties of *lèse majesté*.

W. L. B.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE AUSTRIAN INVASION.

Meeting at Kragujevatz—The Military Situation—Relations between Serbia and Bulgaria—Albania—Mobilisation of Bulgaria—Air Raid at Kragujevatz—Nish Decorated—Non-arrival of the French—Gloom in Serbia—Arrival of Freshly-wounded at Vrn̄tse—Progress of Austro-Germans—Refugees at Vrn̄tse—Other British Missions arrive—Period of Anxiety—Our Austrian Prisoners leave—Departure of Serbian Officials—Approaching Cannonade—Waiting for the Invaders.

As the summer wore on, and the long-expected renewal of active hostilities on the Serbian frontier did not take place, the number of patients in our hospitals gradually diminished. On August 9th the total number of in-patients was but 180, on September 8th only 167, and of these about one-tenth were civilians. On July 27th a meeting of the heads of the British units then in Serbia had been summoned at Kragujevatz to discuss the situation with Sir Ralph Paget, the British Commissioner. We were necessarily ignorant of the details of the military situation and did not know what prospect there was of the resumption of active hostilities. The Serbs were known to be holding the line of the Danube, Save, and Drina rivers in the north and north-west, while a considerable portion of their army was guarding the Bulgarian frontier on the east and south-east. It seemed improbable that the Serbian army, now so much reduced in numbers, would assume the offensive on the northern front; any advance into Austria-Hungary

would leave both flanks of the army unprotected and expose it to attack on either side. But there was much talk of the Serbian army being reinforced by French and English troops, and if these came in sufficient numbers it seemed reasonable to believe that an advance into the level plains of Hungary might be made. On the other hand, if nothing else happened, a fresh invasion of Serbia by the Central Powers was to be expected sooner or later.

In either case it seemed likely that there would be plenty of active work before long for all the British missions. There had been a general feeling among the British that it was a pity that so many doctors and nurses should remain comparatively idle in Serbia while medical help was apparently so urgently needed in Malta and elsewhere. At the Kragujevatz meeting it was unanimously agreed that those of the units who could do so should stay in Serbia at least a few weeks longer. As related in the last chapter, our own Unit had received a letter from the military authorities begging us to remain, and a circular letter from the Crown Prince had recently been sent to all British units thanking them for their services and expressing the hope that the day of their departure would be far distant. It was clear that the horrors of the previous winter, due largely to the lack of doctors, nurses, and sanitary material of all kinds, were still fresh in the minds of the Serbian authorities.

A few words may here be introduced as to the political situation with regard to the relations between Bulgaria and Serbia. No one in Serbia had forgotten the tragic events which led to the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1913. In 1912 Serbia and Bulgaria, who for

a thousand years had been jealous rivals and bitter enemies, had at last been induced to join hands together with Montenegro and Greece and to form the Balkan Alliance. The results of the victorious war waged by these allied nations against the Turks had led to the acquisition of much more territory than had been considered possible before the war began, and unfortunate disputes as to the distribution of this newly-won territory at once arose. Practically the whole of Albania had been conquered by the Serbs, and much more of Thrace had been captured by the Allies than had been anticipated. By the terms of a secret treaty between Serbia and Bulgaria a large district of Macedonia was to have passed to Bulgaria. But Bulgaria had obtained far more of Thrace than had been expected, and Serbia, by the action of Austria and the Powers, had been prevented from retaining even that minimum portion of Albania, including the strip of sea coast,* to which she laid claim and on the retention of which her future development so largely depended. It seemed, therefore, to Serbia that, as she had been deprived of the legitimate fruits of conquest in Albania, while Bulgaria had been allowed to retain much more territory in Thrace than she had originally expected to obtain, it was unfair, under the greatly changed conditions, that so much of Macedonia also should pass to Bulgaria. If the terms of the secret treaty were to be rigidly kept, Serbia, having been deprived by the Powers of access to the sea on the west, would now be shut off more than ever from the Ægean Sea on the south, by the

* About 50 kilometres from Alessio to Durazzo, together with all that part of Albania between lines drawn from Alessio to Djakova and from Durazzo to Lake Ochrida.

interposition of a broad band of Bulgarian land between her and Greece.

Serbia therefore claimed a revision of the terms of this secret treaty, and, as Bulgaria would not agree, the dispute was submitted to the arbitration of the Russian Emperor, in accordance with another clause in the treaty, and with the consent of all four belligerents. It was then that Bulgaria, on the night of June 29th, 1913, without any declaration of hostilities, suddenly and treacherously attacked her former ally. In the short war that followed, Serbia and Greece, much to the annoyance of Austria, were completely victorious over the Bulgarians. Macedonia remained in Serbian hands, while Greece retained Salonica and Kavala.

It can easily be understood, therefore, that there was in the summer of 1915 but little good feeling between Serbia and Bulgaria, and it is not surprising that Serbia both feared and distrusted her treacherous neighbour. In the preceding winter, as we had entered Serbia and our train had crawled over the bridges temporarily repaired after recent Bulgarian raids,* we had realised that the Bulgarian frontier was only some six miles from the main line of Serbian railway, and that an attack in force at this point by Bulgaria would cut Serbia off completely from the south, and indeed practically isolate her entirely as far as railway communication was concerned. As we looked at the map we remarked in February

* Not long afterwards, in April, 1915, another similar raid took place at the same point, but was repelled by the Serbian troops. Responsibility for all these raids was disclaimed by the Bulgarian Government, but there can be but little doubt that the latter connived at, if they did not actually instigate, these raids.

that we had entered a "trap," and that if Bulgaria chose to be nasty the door of the trap would close upon us. And close it did before we left Vrn̄tse !

All through the summer there was much talk among the Serbs of war with Bulgaria, and much hatred of their hereditary enemies was freely expressed by Serbs of all classes of society. The opinion was prevalent in Vrn̄tse that it would be much better to attack Bulgaria at once and not wait for Bulgaria to attack them. "The war would be over in a fortnight," said an optimistic and certainly over-confident Serb gentleman to me one day. What the opinion of the Government and higher military authorities was upon this question of war with Bulgaria we had of course no opportunity of learning, but that such an offensive war would have been very popular among the soldiers and the mass of the people we had no doubt at all.

Towards the end of September came the news of Bulgaria's mobilisation.* All passenger traffic on the railways was stopped. Some of us who were at Nish at that time saw thousands of troops with guns and stores of all kinds being rushed through to the Bulgarian frontier. At Vrn̄jatchka Banja day and night troop-trains could be heard running down our valley of the western Morava on their way to the Eastern front. On September 30th a small party of us had occasion to go to Kragujevatz, the military headquarters and seat of the arsenal. We arrived just in time to see the end of an Austro-German

* This seems to have actually begun on September 23rd. According to the author of "*The Times History of the War*" (Vol. VII., p. 372), "there is good reason to believe that a secret treaty by which Bulgaria practically bound herself to the course which she afterwards took had been signed as far back as August 17th."

aeroplane raid. Wild excitement prevailed. A German aeroplane had just been brought down in the centre of the town and all Kragujevatz was jubilant. The mangled and scorched bodies of the unfortunate aviators brought home to us very vividly the horrors of war. The remains of the aeroplane, which we inspected at the arsenal, showed the name of a Stuttgart maker. Early on the following morning we were roused by the sound of fresh firing, and were interested spectators of another air raid in which many bombs were dropped, several civilians and one Austrian prisoner being killed. One bomb fell without exploding in the soft ground of the Stobart camp, at which we were staying,* and another did much damage to their stock of marmalade, and, by a few feet, just missed killing a nurse. The object of the raid was evidently the arsenal, into which two or three bombs were actually dropped. A Serb workman was killed, and a couple of bullets penetrated a large petrol tank, but otherwise no harm was done.

On October 8th a visit to Nish showed the town gaily decorated with flags in excited anticipation of the arrival of French troops, who were expected from Salonika on the morrow, but who never came. Crowds of refugees were coming in from Posharevatz, which had just been heavily bombarded from the air. No one seemed to know whether the line from Salonika was still open or not. Among the officials, both Serb

* On several occasions on our visits to Kragujevatz we enjoyed the kind hospitality of Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, whose admirable and well-arranged camp was situated on the racecourse just outside the town. The sanitary arrangements of this camp are especially worthy of mention. Sometimes we stayed with the Scottish women at their hospital in the town, where since an early stage of the war they had been doing excellent work.

and foreign, pessimism was very marked, and not a few indignant remarks were heard about the Allies, who had "deserted" Serbia in her time of need. There was among the people, and to a certain extent among the officials, a strong feeling that Serbia, who in the earlier stages of the war had done so much for the Allied cause by decisive victories over the Austrians, should not have been left single handed to repel a simultaneous invasion by three nations. Although necessarily ignorant of the military reasons which forbade the granting of much-needed help to the sorely-trying little nation, we could not help wondering whether these criticisms were not perhaps to some extent justified.

On October 8th the British Commissioner informed us that it was the wish of the Serbian military authorities that the British units should withdraw if the Serbian army found it necessary to retreat, as it was expected they would. By so doing it was hoped that their *personnel* and stores would be preserved for future service, and they would obviously be of more service to Serbia and to the allied cause than if they stayed on and became prisoners. They were to hold themselves in readiness to take this step when the expected military orders to this effect arrived, which however, in our case, they never did.

Two days later freshly-wounded began to dribble into our hospitals, and we heard tales of severe fighting on the northern frontier. But it was not until the 17th that we received a large batch of severely-wounded (Fig. 21).

The arrival of the freshly-wounded was a novel experience for most of the Unit, especially for the



FIG. 21.—THE RECEIVING-ROOM STAFF AT THE TERAPIA. WAITING FOR THE FRESHLY WOUNDED. EACH PATIENT ARRIVED THROUGH A WINDOW ON THE LEFT.



FIG. 22.—"THE TABLES TURNED."

Austro-Hungarian sentry and British prisoners at the Terapia. In the background is seen an Austrian ex-prisoner



orderlies and V.A.D.'s. Few of them had seen as yet any freshly-wounded cases in Serbia, and more than half the Unit had not even witnessed the coming of those patients whom we had received on half-a-dozen occasions from other hospitals. There had been more than one false alarm, and the lay members of the Mission felt, strange as it may seem, thoroughly disappointed. It was not that they wanted to see men in pain or took a cold-blooded view of their patients. But they had gone to Serbia to look after wounded, and their tempers had in some cases suffered not a little through having so little surgical work to do. At last, as mentioned, on October 17th, we were definitely informed that wounded were coming and that most of them were serious cases. The hospital had been ready for some time past, but most of the day was spent in preparing the receiving room, getting out overalls, soap and towels for the washing staff, and arranging the operating theatre. The spirits of the Unit rose at once, and some of the members were never so utterly frivolous as during the hour or two of waiting before our grim work was to begin. The more sober people were rather scandalised at the contrast between this gaiety and the tragedy of what was to come. But the patients themselves saw none of it, and no one worked the worse, when the time came, for having laughed and sung during the period of anticipation.

The first wounded came about half-past 7 in the evening, when it was already quite dark. We were all at our posts at that time, and the bustle indoors was so great that we did not hear the noise of the

motor ambulance on the gravel. A knock at the door brought out an English orderly, the window of the receiving room was thrown open, and the work began. We had been waiting for it for months. Nobody got to bed till half-past 2 the next morning, and some of our enthusiastic orderlies described it as the happiest time of their lives. The ambulance and the ox-wagons drew up in the light that poured from the open window. The ambulance was easily unloaded, but to get a badly wounded man out of an ox-wagon was not always easy, and often the loose side of the cart had to be taken out before the man could be lifted with sufficient gentleness on to a stretcher. The stretchers were pushed through the window, English and Austrians together lending a hand. Inside, the undressing and washing went on without ceasing. On trestle beds under the windows two men at a time were stripped and shaved. Then they were carried into the nearest bathroom and washed, while their clothes, always dirty and generally verminous, were put into sacks and labelled.

Dr. McLaren was in attendance in the receiving room to examine and dress the wounds and to send the cases up to the ward or into the operating theatre as required. The more serious cases were hurried off to the theatre, where the Professor, with the Frau Doktor as anæsthetist, waited in the glare of the electric lamps, the Primus stoves roaring under the sterilisers in the next room. We had thirteen men on the table that night,—three of them bad head cases—and the theatre staff was as tired as anybody else when the last man was sent upstairs. The

Austrian prisoners worked furiously, and more than once a weary orderly, after hours of continuous labour, refused to allow an Englishman to take a hand with the stretchers. The devotion of these men drew praise from everybody. Prince Alexis, who had come in during the proceedings, watched the Austrians carrying the wounded from the carts, and broke out into exclamations at their unwearying industry. It should be repeated here that the orderlies seemed to work for the wounded themselves, and not merely as obeying the orders of their Serb captors or the English to whom they had been assigned. The spirit with which they worked was as fine as their arms were strong. At half-past 2 everybody went to bed. But at 3 o'clock there came more knocking at the door, and two belated sufferers had to be taken from an ox wagon and washed and put to bed before we could all sleep. The next morning we were roused again at 6 o'clock by an ambulance full of officers, who had to be sent away to the Kruna, because we had no accommodation for them.

While the freshly-wounded were being admitted to the Terapia, patients were also being received into the Drzhavna by Dr. Christopherson, assisted by Dr. Isobel Inglis and Sisters Amott and Brock. A few slightly-wounded had come in during the preceding day after walking up from the station, and before long the place was full to overflowing.

Among the cases received on October 17th were several perforating wounds of the brain and numerous compound fractures of the thigh. All wounds had been inflicted at least two or three days previously, and most were already septic. We were struck

nevertheless, by the care that had been taken in the preliminary dressing and splinting of the patients. Nearly all the wounds had been caused by shrapnel, a few by rifle fire, scarcely any by bayonet. An extensive wound of the frontal lobe with much loss of brain substance was treated by being laid freely open, nearly half the left frontal bone having to be removed with trephine and forceps ; a large hernia cerebri ensued, but this gradually receded, and in a few weeks the patient made a good recovery and seemed but little the worse for his injury. Another, with a depressed but non-perforating shrapnel wound of the right occipital lobe, was on admission completely blind in both eyes ; the depressed bone was removed. About three days later he had recovered his sight so far that he could distinguish and name coins shown to him, and was doing very well indeed. Two days later he suddenly complained of violent pains in the head and died in a few hours. Another man, under the care of Dr. Christopherson at the Drzhavna Hospital, had been shot through the centre of the head of the left humerus ; a conical German bullet was extracted from the lower part of the right axilla in the mid-axillary line. The patient made an excellent and speedy recovery, but how the great vessels of the mediastinum escaped injury is difficult to explain. Another man was shot transversely through the centre of the thorax, the bullet passing between the œsophagus and the heart ; a left empyema developed. For a time the patient was very ill, but seemed to be on the high road to recovery when he was transferred to another hospital and we lost sight of him. From the first night until the coming of the Austrian invaders the

Terapia and Drzhavna were full, and one after another the other hospitals were filled too, until we had to revert in some cases to the Serb practice of putting two men in one bed.

The School, the Baraque, and the Atina were filled only with the overflowings from the Terapia and the Drzhavna. The Merkur was in theory only to be used for the same purpose, but on one strenuous day it was suddenly flooded with cases of slightly-wounded, and a receiving staff had to be improvised. The Drzhavna was prepared for anything. The patients in this hospital were on the whole less seriously wounded than those who came to the Terapia, and their arrival caused less excitement. But for the same reason there was a more constant flow of cases in and out. Sometimes the majority of the beds would be emptied as soon as the clothes of their occupants could be recovered from the disinfector.*

The whole staff was continually at work looking after the arrivals and departures, as well as tending the patients who remained. There were three entrances to the Drzhavna, and by all three during October patients used to trickle in at all hours of the day, and the sister in charge, Sister Amott, involved in the care of sixty patients, would find every now and then a strange figure sitting by the stove in the middle of her ward, waiting patiently till she had time to notice him. Sometimes, as on the first day, the Drzhavna cases would come in large numbers. At one moment the yard would be empty, and at another one of the staff, going to the door, would find himself face to face

* The Thresh steam disinfector, which, not long before, had arrived after its circuitous journey, had been set up at the Drzhavna, and during this time of stress proved to be of the greatest value.

with a semi-circle of weary and dishevelled men, all staring at him and all silent. It was profoundly moving to come in this way suddenly upon Serbian wounded. They stood round in little herds, asking for nothing and making no complaint, but waiting, like animals, until those who had power to save them or leave them should take note of their necessities.

On October 15th news came that the Austrians were occupying Posharevatz, Semendria, Belgrade, and Obrenovatz ; also that the Bulgars had penetrated the Eastern frontier at two points,* although it was rumoured that they had been driven back again. Major Gashitch warned us that we might receive orders to move at very short notice. Packing-cases were brought out by our engineer and made ready for immediate use.

From the 16th till the 18th Vrnitse was full of rumours. War on Bulgaria had been declared by the Great Powers ; Varna and Bourgas were being bombarded by the Russians ; Strumnitza had been occupied by the French, Tsaribrod by the Serbs ; the National Bank had been transferred to Prisrend and the military headquarters to Krushevatz. A strange jumble of truth and fiction, but at the time we had no means of separating the one from the other.

On the 21st a large number of slightly-wounded arrived, and as the train which brought them had many severely-wounded on board, who went on to the Serb hospital at Chachak, we were indignant at what seemed to us a breach of faith on the part of the mili-

* We afterwards learnt that in reality Bulgaria by this time had invaded Serbia at some eight different points, and that fighting had begun on October 11th, although the formal declaration of war upon Serbia had not been made until the 14th.

tary authorities. Months before, when entreated by the Serb military authorities to prolong our stay in Serbia, we had been repeatedly assured, both verbally and in writing, that when fresh fighting began only the most severe surgical cases would be sent to us. On pressing the major for an explanation we learnt that a secret order had been received that for the present only slightly-wounded were to be sent to the foreign missions, as an order for their withdrawal to the south was to be expected at any moment.

On the 27th another trainload of wounded, mostly not very severe cases, arrived, and we were all kept busy. On the 28th important news arrived. Uzhitsa to the west, at the head of our valley, was being evacuated, and all British missions to the north of us were being withdrawn to the line of the Western Morava ; our little town lay some three miles south of this, between Kraljevo and Krushevatz. Kragujevatz, fifty miles by road to the north, was being evacuated, the headquarters staff moving thence to Krushevatz. The seat of government was being transferred to Kraljevo. About this time officials of the Public Health and some other departments, together with many ex-ministers, sought refuge at Vrnjatchka Banja, the fashionable health resort of Serbia. The place threatened to become inconveniently overcrowded, and we began to fear shortage of food. The 2nd British Farmers' Unit under Mr. Parsons, the Scottish Women's Unit under Dr. Alice Hutchison, and several members of the Wounded Allies' Mission under Dr. Aspland arrived, and considerable rearrangement of our hospitals took place. The Farmers, who had been obliged to leave

Belgrade very hurriedly during the bombardment, took over our Merkur hospital, and the Scottish Women for a short time had the Atina.

The British Commissioner now paid us a hurried visit to explain the arrangements he had been trying to make with the Serbian authorities for the withdrawal of the British units to the south or west. Only a very few ox wagons were obtainable, and it was obvious that most of the units at Vrnjatchka Banja would have to stay and be captured; only individual members, who for one reason or another desired to escape, would have the opportunity of making their way, mostly on foot, across the mountains to the Adriatic. Three of our Unit, together with several of the British Red Cross Unit (mostly English orderlies), went off together under the leadership of Mr. Gordon. The adventures and trials which they met with on their difficult trek to San Giovanni di Medua are described in the next chapter.

The number of our Unit remained, however, at the average strength of twenty-five, having been reinforced by the addition of the British chaplain and two refugee ladies from Belgrade and Nish.

We were now passing through a very trying and a very depressing period. We heard cannon daily, and, though rumours of Austro-German repulses still persisted, it was evident that the Serbian army was retreating and that the enemy was advancing steadily. We discussed the prospects with our prisoners, who were no more happy in their minds than we were ourselves. "They may be on us any day now," remarked the ex-Carlton waiter gloomily. Indeed, from the time that it became known that the

Serbian army was retiring and that the Austro-Germans were approaching there was little sign of jubilation among the prisoners. It is true that the prospect for them was not a bright one ; it was not likely the Serbians would leave them to fall into the hands of the invaders, and probably much suffering might thus be before them ; also it was generally believed that the Slav prisoners who had been captured unwounded were likely to be shot when retaken by the Austrians. But there was certainly very little desire on the part of the prisoners to return to the fighting line. It was said that some of the Magyars were keen on fighting again, but certainly this was not the case as a rule with either the Germans or Slavs. Very bitter was the tone in which a sergeant of German race, and a smart young soldier, spoke of returning again to be " Kanonenfutter." It emphasised all the difference between forced and voluntary service. Another young German-Austrian spoke of his experience of the war with much horror. " Es ist nicht menschlich " (" It is not human "), he said, and all he wished was to remain with us till the war was over.

On November 1st all the Austrian prisoners except four were withdrawn from our hospitals and replaced by sixteen Serbian youths with no personal knowledge whatever of hospital work. On the same day our Serbian military head, although giving no direct orders, strongly advised us to withdraw also, abandoning all our stores and personal luggage. Dr. Charles Mack, an American doctor, kindly consented to take charge of the hospital if we decided to leave, and the great majority of our members were anxious

to go. We knew of a direct short route across the mountains to Rashka, a place which the Heads of our Mission had visited many years before, and thence it would have been possible to get across *via* Novi Bazar and Berane to the Adriatic. But this would have meant walking the whole way, carrying provisions for at least a fortnight. For this it was essential we should have at least three or four horses to carry food and blankets. We were quite determined not to attempt the ordinary route *via* Kraljevo and the long, narrow Ibar gorge, which was also known to us, as it was the main route by which the Serbian army was retreating, and was likely to be choked by refugees. Our hesitation, which lasted for a few hours, was ended when we found that the horses we had expected to obtain were not available.

On the following day all our Austrian prisoners were restored to us, and the contingent of Serbian youths, who in the meantime had been washed and cleared of lice, in their turn withdrew.

A week of considerable anxiety ensued. The hospitals were evacuated as far as possible. All patients who were well enough were sent to their commandos; those not well enough for this but capable of being moved were sent home, if their homes were in districts not yet occupied by the enemy.

On November 5th all the prisoners in Vrnitse of German, Hungarian, and Jewish race were marched away to share in the great Serbian retreat across Albania to the Adriatic. The Slav prisoners in the place remained till next day; then most of the Serbian hospital officials departed, taking with them Czechs, Croats, Slovaks, and other prisoners of Slav

nationality. In our own case, however, in order that the hospital should not be wholly deprived of servants, the prisoners were given the choice of going or staying. The majority chose to go—some aware that the circumstances of their capture would not bear investigation, and therefore afraid of the fate which would await them ; others, with no such cause for anxiety, deliberately preferring to face the certain horrors of a march across a starving country rather than to fight against men of their own race in a war they hated. The hardships of that march to the Adriatic are well known, and many of the prisoners perished on the way.

A good many of the Slav prisoners, however, were left behind in Vrn̄tse, probably largely because they were simply forgotten in the general rush. Some of the forgotten ones tried to get away on their own account ; one, formerly an orderly of our own, came up on the following day to beg a great-coat, saying he had obtained a pass and was going to escape in civil dress with an Englishman. Another, a Roumanian, who was probably overlooked because he was neither German, Magyar, Jew nor Slav, was seized by a deep desire to walk to Italy on his own account, but was refused a pass and told he must remain.

The three or four days that elapsed between the departure of the last Serbian fugitive and the arrival of the invaders was a very strange period. There was a sudden calm ; rumours entirely ceased ; the street was deserted ; ox wagons had disappeared, most having gone off with the refugees. We just waited, and strangely enough the predominant feeling in the place was a desire that the Austrians would hurry up

and come. For Vrintse felt uncomfortably deserted ; the police officials, the hospital commissaires, in fact almost everyone on whom the maintenance of law and order depended, had gone. There was fear of looting and other deeds of violence from stray soldiers or bad characters left behind. Some burglaries were reported at Trstenik, and looting went on merrily at the station, whence the station-master also had departed, but nothing of the kind occurred at Vrintse.

Day by day the sound of distant cannonade became louder and louder as the Austro-German forces approached. Rumour said that a stand would be made in our valley at Trstenik, a narrow place some three miles to the east of us. It was said that the digging of trenches had actually begun. It seemed probable that we should find ourselves in the very centre of a battle. Late in the evening of the 6th a violent explosion, which shook the building, caused some of us to exclaim, "Here is the first shell." But it was caused by our own people blowing up the great bridge of Trstenik. Our Serb commissaire at the Terapia had sought safety in flight, but the Austro-Serbian one at the Drzhavna, M. Milutin Jovanovitch, remained with us and rendered invaluable service. Our wood supply gave out, and as no more was forthcoming we began with our own hands to cut down the trees in the grounds of the Terapia.

So passed the last days of waiting and watching for the invaders, while away among the hills to the south Britons, Serbians, and Austrian prisoners were taking part in that great retreat which will rank among the tragedies of the war.

J. B.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ESCAPE OF THE THREE.

Reasons for Flight—Choice of Route—Kraljevo—Food and Transport Difficulties—The Gorge of the Ibar and its Human Torrent—Austrian Prisoners at Rashka—Novi Bazar—In the Hills—Podgoritsa—The Lake of Scutari—Mattresses or Foreigners—Scutari—English as she is Spoke—Two Ways Home—Horse Exercise—The Adriatic Mission—So Near and Yet so Far—Hours of Idleness—On Board the *Harmonie*—The Submarine—Reflections on Ourselves and the Serbs—Official Neglect and Popular Generosity.

WHEN it became clear that Vrnjatchka Banja was destined to fall into the hands of the enemy the question arose whether the Mission should stay or go. All could go only if transport were provided by the Government. Without that a small party might slip away, leaving behind all their heavy baggage, but there was little chance for the Unit as a whole. By the end of October it was certain that the transport would not be available, and the problem then was to decide which members of the Mission ought to get away at once and which of them were able to undertake the arduous and possibly perilous journey, a great part of which would have to be accomplished on foot. As it was uncertain whether the Austro-Germans would hold to the Geneva Convention, it was considered that men of military age, who were not qualified doctors, ought to go, to escape the risk of internment till the end of the war. Jones and Lingner thought it better to stay, and only Gordon and Blease, who had urgent

private reasons for returning speedily to England, finally decided to escape. With Gordon went Mrs. Gordon, and the two together were formally entrusted by Sir Ralph Paget with the guidance of any other English men and women who chose to accompany them. An order signed by Major Gashitch entitled them to a daily ration of bread. Transport they hoped to get at Kraljevo. But they were prepared from the first to rely upon their own supplies of food and their own legs. On the afternoon of October 30th the three left the Terapia, taking with them a rucksack each, some portable food, a few blankets, and Blease's camera.

The Bulgars were by this time in safe possession of Skoplje, and the only line of retreat was from Kraljevo towards the south. Kraljevo, as appears from the maps, is the point at which several roads from east, west, and north converge, and due south from it runs the only high road which offers a chance of escaping the Austro-Germans and Bulgars alike. A map in Blease's possession showed, further on, a practicable route through Montenegro to the coast of the Adriatic at San Giovanni di Medua, and, though there was more than one discussion of alternatives, the refugees never wavered in their preference of this route over the others. At Kraljevo and elsewhere the authorities urged them to go to Mitrovitsa, in the hope of escaping through Skoplje to Salonica. But, unless the Bulgars were driven back, that plan was founded on sand, and could only have ended in a hopeless entanglement with a host of other fugitives, military and civil, in a district emptied of supplies, and an ultimate scramble over the worst part of the mountains to the same point

on the Adriatic. With a definite preference for the route which they eventually took, the three mounted the roof of a crowded railway carriage at a few minutes before midnight and rumbled along to Kraljevo. The early morning they spent on the floor of the stifling telegraph office in the company of others like themselves, and then, dirty and sleepy, emerged into the town to look for transport. Kraljevo they had last seen as a quiet and picturesque little country place with a few people scattered about the streets. It was now surging like a river in spate. The road from the station, churned up into mud, was filled with a torrent of carts, animals, and human beings: soldiers, wounded and unwounded; transport drivers; English, French, and Russian doctors and nurses; Austrian prisoners, and refugees of all classes. The animals strained, the carts groaned, men on horseback splashed shouting through the traffic, and an endless procession of foot passengers picked its way in either direction along such dry tracks as it could find. The market-square boiled like a pot, and the restless crowd overflowed into the restaurants about its edge. Inside, everybody chattered restlessly, and hardly anybody seemed to eat. Meat could be bought, and there were a few eggs, but most of the people seemed to have nothing but black coffee, and one man who brought in a loaf of bread created as much sensation as if he had brought in a nugget of gold. Bread, in fact, was not to be got, except on a military order, and it required prodigious exertions on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon to wrest from the reluctant authorities even a third of their prescribed allowance. For the first time in his life Blease tried to buy bread at a shop,

and was told that there was none to buy. They had enough food of other kinds to keep them for some days, but he will never forget the feeling of helplessness which for a moment seized him when he realised that he was there, in the midst of thousands of hungry people, and the money in his pocket gave him no advantage over the poorest of them all.

In Kraljevo the party stayed three days, waiting for transport, and every day the signs grew more ominous. During a raid on the bread sacks at the station they heard the people crying out that they had not eaten for four days. Ever since reaching Kraljevo they had heard the sound of the guns, warning even the purposeless chatterers in the restaurants that they must make up their minds quickly and go. The French aeroplanes had left one by one, flying steadily to Rashka. Near the station workmen were hastily dismantling Austrian and Turkish cannon, trophies brought from the arsenal at Kragujevatz, and now to be left behind. Dr. Beavis's English field hospital went off in its Ford cars to Mitrovitsa, abandoning all its heavy baggage. Detachments of the Stobarts and the Scottish Women's Hospital, without drugs, instruments or stores, went off in Serbian military cars. The civilian refugees poured out on foot, in ox carts, in horse wagons, or in carriages, and overhead enemy aeroplanes watched, in cold blood, the unceasing exodus. There seemed to be no spare vehicles of any kind, and one English motor, laden with hospital stores, was actually stolen by the military as it stood, deserted for a moment by its driver, in the main street. At last Dr. Churchin, who served the British missions, in this hour of defeat and disorganisation, with the



FIG. 23.—AUSTRIAN PRISONERS IN THE GREAT RETREAT.



FIG. 24.—SERBIANS RETREATING TOWARDS ALBANIA.

same unwearying persistence as in the profound quiet of the preceding six months, snatched ten horse carts out of the whirling stream of traffic. Food was taken from a truck of hospital stores : a big bag of rice, cocoa, corned beef, condensed milk, biscuits, sugar, and curry powder. On the morning of November 3rd a party of about twenty men and women, with the food, two big tents, and their personal baggage, left Kraljevo for the south.

As far as Rashka the road followed the course of the river Ibar. For the first six miles it ran over a flat plain, then climbed a hill, and descended by a great zig-zag into a narrow gorge, which wound south for fifty miles. Along this gorge ran side by side the road and the river, the road now a hundred or two hundred feet above the water, now sinking until it was almost on the same level. The scenery was not very impressive, except at one magnificent horse-shoe curve, where the great ruined fort of Maglitch frowned down upon the fugitives out of the gathering darkness. But they had no eye for scenery. They moved with a vast unending procession of men, animals, and vehicles of every kind. For three days and two nights they tramped and rode along the gorge, and it seemed as if all the world tramped and rode with them. Empty wagons were coming north, but were like mere ripples on the surface of the tide. A string of field-kitchens drawn by oxen ; a Serbian ambulance train ; a caravan of gipsies, bargaining by the wayside for the sale of horses which they had doubtless stolen further north ; two battalions of the last Serb levies, boys of sixteen and seventeen, armed with one rifle among five, fed with bread one day in three, once trying to

raid the provision cart of the English, and constantly offering to buy their rice and cocoa, sometimes beaten by their officers, but on the whole cheerful enough, and every one of them bearing a brilliant rug across his shoulders ; troops of Austrian prisoners ; officers on horseback ; officers and civilians in carriages ; the Crown Prince ; the King's cousin ; wagons laden with public or private stores, one at least carrying nothing more valuable than a number of deck chairs ; great military automobiles storming through the press of slower traffic ; and, slipping in and out where they found a way, the foot passengers, whose homes were already in the hands of the enemy, and who were going south, not because they had anything to find there, but only because the enemy was behind.

The great mass showed no signs of panic, only of patience. But isolated scenes of horror were not wanting. At one place a horse was pushed over the edge of the road, and scrambled back, trembling and sweating, two hundred feet above the remorseless river. At another a cart and two oxen had fallen eighty feet, and the passers-by could see the oxen drowned in the water and the hapless peasants saving pieces of crockery that had been scattered in the fall. There was no more hope for an animal that fell on the road than for one that fell in the river. Neither stream would wait. The English saw a great cart urged over the body of a living ox, and Gordon shot a horse which had collapsed in the very middle of the track and was being crushed before their eyes. The worst time of the Serbian exodus had not yet come. There was no snow, and nothing was to be seen of the trail of dead and dying men and animals

which was afterwards drawn across the savage mountains of Albania. But it required little imagination to picture what would eventually be the fate of this retreating host, confined, but for the outlet to the west, in a district which could do no more than support its native population even in time of peace.

The first night in the gorge brought no rest. They tried to sleep in the open, pulling their carts to the side of the road, while the main current roared beside them. But within two hours a shouting transport officer urged the drivers into flight again, and before the Gordons could overtake him and persuade him that they were of the Red Cross and should be allowed to rest the carts were half a mile away. Two more uneasy hours were spent on the side of the gorge, with the rain wetting their faces, and the Serbian boys, in their neighbouring bivouacs, diverting themselves by firing rifles and throwing hand grenades into the rocks. Then they rose before dawn to push on to a more open place. Five hours they trudged before they found it, and it was only a wide part of the road. There they broke their fast, threw away all, except the sides of the tents, to relieve the horses, and then went on again, till the evening of the second day brought them into open fields by the village of Ushtye. There they made long low tents out of the sides of the big tents, and slept in a damp field, with the rain thundering on the canvas, while the boy soldiers camped above them on the bare hillside beside great fires which flamed and glowed all night long. The next day, breaking in mist and rain, put them at the head of the procession of fugitives and brought them

to the little town of Rashka. There they found the Government, the Staff, the foreign attachés, the French aeroplanes, the royal band forlornly carrying off its instruments, and all the other signs of flight.

From Rashka some of the party followed the fatal track to Mitrovitsa, to find the exits in the south in the hands of the Bulgars, and to struggle back, over unspeakably bad roads and in deadly snow, to the coast which they might have reached so easily by the other route. It required little deliberation to confirm Gordon and the rest in their preference for the south-westerly to the south-easterly direction, and after two nights under tents a party of ten men and two women set off in the carts for Novi Bazar. The second woman was Miss Brindley, of the Stobart Unit.

On the day of their departure Blease had a melancholy experience. All along the road there had been gangs of Austrian prisoners, some working at repairs, others merely hurrying away with the retreating Serbs (Fig. 23). Two or three of these gangs, each several hundred strong, had camped at Rashka on the open hillside by the English tents, and Blease, climbing up to the shattered Turkish blockhouse on the summit, passed through them among the dying fires. As he came down he was suddenly addressed by name. It was like being accosted by a ghost out of a graveyard. The man who spoke was Madjaroschi, a Hungarian who had left our service at the Terapia some weeks before. Asked if he wanted to be retaken and fight again in the ranks, he replied: "Why not? One man must live and another must die."

Further down the hill Blease encountered some Germans, who said that they had had one loaf of bread between five men three days before and were to receive another that day. "There is nothing good in war," said the Englishman. "Nothing at all," replied the German. All these men, ill-fed, ill-clothed, and without shelter, were faced with two alternatives—to escape to their own armies and face death once more on the field, or to go on with the Serbs and meet it more dreadfully in the rocks and snows of Albania. To those who remembered how the Austrian prisoners at Vrnjatchka Banja welcomed their captivity in the hands of the English, and how they looked with horror upon the advance of their own armies into Serbia, it was a very grievous thought that they too would soon be at Rashka, dirty, verminous, unfed, and without shelter, with the same poor chance of life as Madjaroschi and the Germans. In fact, many Austrians seem to have got through alive and are now in Sardinia. But how many of our own Vrnjse men are safe, and how many have fallen in fresh battles or become the food of crows and wolves on the pitiless mountains of the west, we shall probably never know.

The fugitives were now left almost to their own resources. No more assistance was to be expected from the Serbian authorities, who had by this time abandoned all pretence of doing anything but keep their beaten armies together, and the one course for the English was to cut themselves adrift. The distance to Novi Bazar was only four hours, but it brought them into a new world. Not only was the town thoroughly Turkish in character, the white-

washed stone houses giving place to architecture of rubble and wood, but it showed hardly any of the signs of disorganisation which marked Rashka no less than Kraljevo. Rashka was full of wandering and aimless people and broken and abandoned automobiles and carts. Novi Bazar, except that the bread shops were under armed guards, was carrying on its ordinary life, and the shopkeepers gossiped and chattered as if the enemy were a thousand miles away and still faced by an unbeaten and well-equipped army. There was not a hint of that terrible procession which thundered down the road to Mitrovitsa, thirty miles to the east, fleeing from the wrath to come. The two things in Novi Bazar which made the most vivid impression upon those who saw them were the magnificent cats which strolled about the shops and the gentleman, armed with a razor and a piece of looking-glass, who sat shaving himself in the drain which ran down the middle of the street. The atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty had been left behind, and the party never encountered it again. Two nights were spent outside the town, and, reinforced by Stajitch, a young Serb, who did invaluable service as interpreter, courier, and bargainer in strange places, the fugitives clambered up into the hills towards the village of Tutin.

Much of that day's journey was done on foot, and the English learnt, after some heart-breaking sprawling through the muddy tracks, that when a peasant in those parts says that your destination is three hours' journey away he means six. The whole party was exhausted by the time they reached

Tutin, three hours after nightfall, and the floor of the Nachelnik's office was as welcome as the softest of beds could have been. Tutin was a village of stone houses with high wooden roofs, and lay in a treeless upland valley 3,000 feet above the sea. From this point the carts could not go. The baggage was therefore lashed on to pack-horses, and the English went on foot. It should be stated that until they reached Scutari they had nothing to pay for transport. Nothing could surpass the willingness of the officials and common people in the country districts to make the escape of the English easy.

The first march extended over eleven hours, and consisted largely of monotonous tramping round the shoulders of the hills with the ultimate objective in full view the whole time. After dark they stumbled down a precipitous descent, crossed a bridge, and arrived in a gentle shower of rain at Rozhai, the first village in Montenegro. There they spent a night on the floor of the village inn, too weary even to complain of the cockroaches with which it was infested. Next day they started off again with fresh pack-horses and climbed over a pass to Vrbitsa. There they occupied the floor of a friendly cottage, sleeping thirteen together in one small room, after a dreadful slaughter of bugs. Another day carried them down to Berane, a long, straggling town built of wood and lying in a valley of extraordinary beauty. There the bridge was broken and they crossed the swirling river in a boat. They found three beds in a homely inn at Berane and a shop full of "Turkish delight," of which they consumed vast quantities. Lunch was made memorable by the cook, who not only

sampled the food as she cooked it, using her fingers instead of a fork, but, finding it unevenly divided between two tables, snatched up sundry pieces and carried them from one to the other. The only other excitement was the cleaning of their boots by the hospitable landlady. She plunged them into a tub of water, and they remained wet for a whole week. A short journey along the valley on the following day ended at Andrijevitsa, the junction between their route and that from Ipek, by which the less fortunate refugees were afterwards to travel.

Here the fatigues of the voyage should have ceased. The rough tracks over the hills by which they had come merge at Andrijevitsa into a well-engineered and macadamised road, practicable for automobiles and carriages. A telegram to Podgoritsa was to have summoned a military car big enough to take all the party and their baggage down to civilisation and the coast. Unhappily, the rivers had washed away bridges and eaten out sections of the road, and there was nothing for it but to push on for two more days on foot. By this time one or two men were suffering from diarrhoea, and it was fortunate that more horses could be got at Andrijevitsa than were required for the baggage alone. A long stage was accomplished by alternate walking and riding, and twice where the bridges had disappeared the disgusted travellers could see their well-metalled road running smoothly along on the other side of the river, while they sprawled and scrambled through indescribable mud and undergrowth at the rate of a mile and a half an hour. After a night spent in wet clothes on a floor at Yabuka the expedition arrived

at Lieva Rieka, from which automobiles could run the whole way to Podgoritsa.

The march had been completed just in time. The weather had been good while the party was tramping over the rolling hills, and they left Lieva Rieka in a military automobile just as the snow began to fall. By the time they had traversed the barren rocks between that place and Podgoritsa the mountains were all white. Podgoritsa was a dull town, lying at the edge of a shingly desert, the monotonous sweep broken by nothing but three stunted trees, the skeleton of a dead horse, a few flocks of sheep, and the scattered travellers who passed across it towards the lake of Scutari. Three days were spent here while Mr. and Mrs. Gordon and Miss Brindley went to Cetinje to interview the British Minister. Nothing varied the monotony of this halt but an attack of pleurisy, which sent one of the party to bed, and the discovery of a large stock of chocolate in a shop. Then another automobile carried the thirteen down to the lake, where they waited several hours for the steamer which the authorities had promised. Here their luck seemed for the first time to fail them. When the steamer arrived, the captain refused to leave the quay. He had come for a cargo of "mattresses," and knew nothing of any refugees. After fruitless argument, the English spread their blankets in an empty storehouse and prepared for another night on the boards, while Stajitch hurried back to communicate with the Prefect of Podgoritsa. Just as sleep was falling upon the occupants of the magazine Stajitch returned. There had been a mistake in a telegram. The Serb word "stramatsa "

means "things strewn," and consequently "mattresses"; while "stranatsa" means "strangers." Ill-humour vanished in a shout of laughter, and at 10 o'clock at night the steamer set off, to churn its way at three miles an hour to Scutari. In that town decent accommodation was found in a hotel, and for the first time since leaving Kraljevo there was an opportunity for real washing. At Scutari all the troubles and difficulties of the flight seemed to be at an end. The town had some modern streets and shops, and the precious money, which had been hitherto reserved for emergencies, was now freely spent in the purchase of native stuffs and curios of all sorts. One delightful old gentleman, who concealed the religion of a Christian beneath the costume of a Turk, and combined the courtly manners of an Albanian chieftain with the commercial aptitude of a Jew pedlar, must have made several pounds of profit out of the band of refugees. At Scutari, too, they found signs of the nearness of home in the scattered English phrases which greeted them in the streets. At Berane and Podgoritsa they had encountered Montenegrins who spoke English with a Yankee accent, but at Scutari it was real English. A child would hold out its hand for a copper and say "Garn wid yer!" and an occasional "Hello, Johnny!" or "Good-morning, Jack!" showed that this "pure well of native English undefiled" had been sunk during the international occupation of the time of the Balkan wars. All these things strengthened the feeling that here at last was the end of the time of trouble. But the sense of security had no real justification. One of the party saw a Turkish

gentleman walking down the main street with a tattered boot on one foot and a slipper on the other. No boots had been imported into Scutari for months, and if it was difficult for boots to come in, it would be difficult for refugees to get out. There was also a vast army of other fugitives, military and civilian, approaching Scutari from the east, and unless the thirteen could procure transport immediately, they might be overtaken and delayed in favour of the Serb Government, the foreign ministers and attachés, and other people of more importance than themselves. There were two possible ways of escape. One was by an Italian steamer from San Giovanni di Medua, twenty-five miles away, and the Italian consul declared that that was the better. On the other hand the Governor of Scutari, which, though technically in Albania, had been for some months in the hands of the Montenegrins, advised a journey on horseback down the coast to Durazzo. From there a steamer could carry the English people safely to Italy, while the harbour of San Giovanni was beset with submarines. After three or four days of hesitation and debate it was decided to go on horseback to Alessio, and there come to a fresh determination, whether to ride on to Durazzo or to embark at San Giovanni. With the express promise of the Montenegrins that fresh horses would be provided at Alessio, the expedition once more started on its way.

As very few of the party had ever ridden anything more formidable than a pack-horse, the departure from Scutari must have been a remarkable spectacle. The journey itself was performed at a walking pace, and as the start had been delayed, two stages were

required instead of one. On the first day there was a dramatic encounter with the advance guard of the British Adriatic Mission, on its way to bring relief to the refugees from Serbia. The relief expedition was in no better case than the refugees, an Austrian submarine having sent all their baggage to the bottom of the sea the night before. It was a grimly humorous experience for those who were fleeing before the enemy to be asked if they could lend any spare underclothing to their countrymen fresh from England. Changes of underclothing, like soap and razors, had long since become superfluities, accepted with indifference and lost without regret.

The night of that day was spent at Barbaloush in a Turkish inn, where the horses slept on the ground floor and the travellers on the floor above. Arrived at Alessio, a picturesque accumulation of rubble across a shaking bridge dominated by a Venetian citadel, the fugitives plunged into a series of ludicrous mishaps. They were told that a motor boat was then in the harbour of San Giovanni and would take them down the coast to Durazzo. The bolder spirits dashed off as fast as their horses could carry them, the less experienced riders ambling more safely in the rear. By the time that the tail of the procession was approaching San Giovanni the head was coming back at full speed. For some obscure reason the boat could not take the English on board at San Giovanni; they must go back to Alessio and drop down the river in small craft and embark at the mouth. Back rode the cavalcade, and as there was need for haste, Blease unfolded his long legs from his horse and walked. Once more in Alessio, they learnt that the boat would

not have them after all, and they received another staggering blow in the information that the Albanian authorities in Alessio had heard nothing about them, that the promised horses had not been obtained, and that it was not at all likely that horses could be found at all. There was nothing to be done but occupy the floor of the Grand Hotel, a picturesque hovel, which provided one bedroom and a landing for the thirteen, their escort of two gendarmes, and two officers, one Serb and the other Albanian, who drank heavily at dinner and coughed and expectorated all night.

Next morning the two Gordons and Blease set off in a blinding gale of rain and snow to San Giovanni. There they hoped to find a ship for Durazzo, or even Brindisi, or the people at the Italian wireless station might be able to help. They arrived wet to the skin, and were cordially welcomed both by the Italians and by the Montenegrin captain of the port. Nothing was easier than to do what they wanted. There were no submarines about that day. A sailing ship would take them to Durazzo in four hours, and waited only for their baggage. Gordon thereupon rushed back to Alessio, while Mrs. Gordon and Blease dried their clothes, with streaming eyes and noses, over a smoking wood fire. By the time that Gordon had brought up the main body the shipman had changed his mind. Probably he was afraid of submarines, but his pretext was that the wind had set in from a new quarter. Mrs. Gordon, capable of any degree of exertion, was for pushing on on foot to Durazzo. But her husband knew his men better, and the expedition took possession of the floor of yet another inn, determined that, whatever happened, it would walk no more. Like

King Charles II., they would not go on their travels again.

Five weary days passed without any event of importance, and the stock of provisions in the inn steadily diminished. Efforts to get a sailing vessel for Durazzo were fruitless. The submarines held the whole place in terror.* When the Adriatic Mission's ship had been sunk a visit had been paid to San Giovanni. One torpedo had been rushed up on to the beach, and another lay in the mud at the bottom of the harbour. The excuse for keeping in port was the unfavourable wind, but the real reason was probably cowardice. A French aeroplane passed over the harbour on the third day, going south to Valona. No sooner was it within earshot than the harbour was black with boats, pulling desperately for the shore; and long after the aeroplane, travelling at forty miles an hour, had crossed the utmost limits of the little bay the seamen were still tugging at the oars, and leaping into the shallows and scrambling up the cliffs, as though the devil himself were behind them. Nothing could be done with the coasting ships. An Italian steamer, the *Benedetto*, lay in the harbour and a French steamer a little beyond her, but they showed no signs of moving, and in any case the Frenchman refused to take any passengers. The Italian would sail, some day, under escort, but no definite information was given for fear of spies. The English fraternised with two Frenchmen, who had got through by the north of Montenegro and had already waited for ten days at San Giovanni.

* It is difficult to understand why the Italian Navy should have failed to keep the port open. The day after the English refugees left, every ship in it was sunk by the Austrians, and the starving Serbs, who came later, found biscuits and bacon floating in the sea and thrown upon the beach.

An English-speaking Serb, coming on foot from Ipek, whom they had first encountered near Andrijevitsa and again at Podgoritsa, hung about the inn, trying to find out when a steamer would put out. Little else varied the monotony of the stay at San Giovanni. Most of the English sat in the inn and played cards. An attempt at football laid half the players breathless on their backs after the first goal, and the wind and snow coming over the northern rocks made less strenuous outdoor life impossible for the greater part of each day. One or two visits were made to the dreadful barracks on the cliff, where a number of Montenegrin soldiers and Albanian carters occupied a great unfurnished room, blown through and through by the ice-cold wind and darkened by the smoke of a dozen fires, round which lay the victims of exposure, wrestling with pleurisy and pneumonia, without bedding and without drugs, a long day's journey from the nearest doctor.

At last a broad hint came from the wireless station that a steamer would come in under escort next day, and the cruiser that brought her in would take the *Benedetto* out. The inn was full of jubilation. But within two hours came definite news that the Serbian Government was at Scutari, and that the *Benedetto* was to be kept back for its use. Only one thing was possible. Passages must be obtained on the French ship. Lieutenant Fabiano, of the wireless station, provided a letter of recommendation, and the Gordons used their utmost eloquence. The captain, explaining that he had neither food nor cabin accommodation, and that if the ship was torpedoed there would not be boats enough for all, at last gave way. At half-past 7 on

the next morning the party was roused, grasped the baggage, and rushed down to the beach, and at 9 o'clock the *Harmonie*, of Marseilles, put out to sea. The stern cable was cut, as the second torpedo was supposed to be entangled in it. Within an hour there appeared, almost simultaneously, the Austrian submarine and the Italian cruiser and her convoy. The submarine was chased away, and nothing worse befell the fugitives than sea-sickness. At 9 o'clock at night they reached Brindisi, and slept on the floor of the cabin, on their baggage, or on coils of rope, while the locomotives on the quay whistled a lullaby. Three days more brought them to London, rather tired of rice, which they had eaten, curried or sugared, twice a day for nearly five weeks, but otherwise none the worse for their adventure.

The chief credit for the success of the expedition seems to belong to Gordon, though how much was due to Mrs. Gordon's command of the Serb language cannot be estimated. The thanks of all the rest are also due to Cutting and Watmough, both British Red Cross Society's men, who lit fires and cooked under all sorts of impossible conditions. The rest did little more than pull their own weight, but as West, of the Serbian Relief Fund, began the journey with a dangerously septic place on his arm, and Mawson, a Red Cross chauffeur, was badly hampered by his attack of pleurisy, they deserve special praise for doing even that. The most extraordinary fact in the story of their escape is that of all the thousands of men, women, and children who fled from Serbia before the Austrians, a mere handful took the same route as Gordon's party. So far as the English themselves know, only six

Serbs followed in their footsteps. Everybody else, drawn by the fatal lure of the railway, came by the routes to the south, and crossed in the snow the high mountains, where a man may go a day's journey in fine weather and see hardly a blade of grass, and the leafless trees seem not to grow out of the earth, but to be thrust into cracks between the stones, like darts scattered from some gigantic aeroplane. Thousands of people perished miserably who might have been saved had they only studied the maps.

But the fault was not only that of the refugees themselves. The Serbian Government must bear some of the blame. It was primarily the duty of the officials to study the maps and control the flight. There was sufficient Austrian labour in the country to rebuild the few bridges that were broken down and repair the bad places in the road, and it would not have been difficult to provide stores of food at regular intervals. A little foresight would thus have made the route taken by Gordon and his party easy and safe for thousands of Serbians. But the Government was so ignorant of the chances of escape in this direction that it even recommended the English to take the road to Mitrovitsa, in defiance of their own better judgment. This blundering was thoroughly characteristic. Foresight, preparation, and anxiety to prevent the loss of life were never Serbian virtues, and the people and Government in their hour of disaster were almost callous in their neglect of precautions against hardships which they afterwards bore with exemplary patience and fortitude.

One other general reflection must be made. If the officials were at fault in not providing more wisely for

the escape of civilians, and if the civilians themselves were amazingly wanting in independence of judgment, there can be no question that all the refugees behaved with wonderful magnanimity. Gordon's party was for three days in the midst of the stream of flight, surrounded by a host of Serbs, of whom most were hungry and many were armed. There was one attempt, by some young recruits, to pilfer from a provision cart, but so far were even these from using violence, that they laid down their rifles in order to get at the food, and one of them left his weapon behind when he ran off. Everyone could see that the English had food, but, though many offered to buy it, no man, however great his own hunger, ever tried to extort so much as a biscuit. As the English refugees were practically defenceless in that terrible confusion, this abstention from violence was beyond praise. It was the most striking example of the Serbian virtues of hospitality and patience in adversity that we received. English people in Serbia have complained of many inconveniences and discomforts. But the memory of these has been obliterated by the single fact that, when the Serbians were perishing in thousands of starvation and exposure, not one English man or woman who started on the great retreat suffered any abuse, or was ever allowed to be in danger of death through want of food.

W. L. B.

CHAPTER XV.

THE AUSTRIANS IN VRNTSE.

Arrival of Austrians—Sentinel at the Terapia—Arrangement of Hospitals—Frost-bitten Soldiers—Soldiers' Gratitude and Docility—Ex-prisoners replaced by Soldiers—Austrian Desire for Peace—Friendly Behaviour—Hungary Paramount—"K. u. K."—Commissariat Arrangements—Dislike of Germans—Ignorance of Red Cross Convention and of British Empire—A Magyar Priest—Story of Little "Dushan"—Lack of Enthusiasm about War among Austro-Hungarians.

ON the evening of November 9th the Austrian troops entered our little town without *éclat* and without disturbance of any kind. Next day a Hungarian lieutenant visited our hospital, formally took it over, and left a sentinel at the gate. This sentinel, like many of the first instalments of Austrian troops who appeared, was an Austrian Serb. He fraternised at once with our prisoners, or rather ex-prisoners, with the patients, and with ourselves. One of our first proceedings was to take the photograph which appears in Fig. 22. This sentinel gave a harrowing account of the privations endured on the march from Belgrade, and informed us that the Austrians were far from happy, since the Italians were advancing far into Austria on the one side and the Russians doing the same on the other. This was strange news to receive from an Austrian soldier. Unfortunately, like most of what we heard in those days, from whatever source, it turned out to be a mere fairy tale. The correctness of the first part of his information, however, was quite borne out by the appearance of the soldiers we saw.

Very dilapidated and weary they looked as regiment after regiment marched, or rather straggled, past into the mountains after the retreating Serbians; the ex-prisoners, who still continued to work in the town just as before the Austrians came, presented a much more prosperous and even smarter appearance, in spite of all the months of captivity through which their uniforms had had to serve them.

After one day the sentinel was removed from our hospital and we were free to go about as we liked. During the next few days we had numerous Austro-Hungarian visitors at the hospitals—generals, colonels, a count, and finally Prince Lobkowitz, who took command of the whole district. Colonel Dr. Pick was in charge of all the medical arrangements, and his first act was to confirm the appointment of the Heads of our Unit, saying he did not wish to interfere in any way with our management of the hospitals and giving us the necessary Austrian authority to continue our hospital work under his nominal supervision. He consulted freely with us and Major Gashitch as to the best means of rearranging the medical work at Vrnjatchka Banja. The Baraque and School had both been emptied before the arrival of the Austrians, but the latter was quickly filled with crowds of frost-bitten Hungarians returning from the mountains, very severe cold having set in on the 17th. Our own hospitals were now reduced to two, the Terapia and the Drzhavna, the latter, as heretofore, remaining under the charge of Dr. Christopherson. Both were overcrowded with Serb wounded. At the former, patients overflowed into the corridors, where we put them on improvised trestle-beds and mattresses.

The evacuation of the slighter cases was then rapidly carried out, and as frost-bitten Hungarians continued to pour into the town we were asked to admit some of them for whom no other accommodation could be found. This we naturally consented to do. Only comparatively slight cases reached Vrantse, but the hospitals were crowded with these. They generally appeared to arrive without previous notice and without any provision having been made for them. One point which struck us about these soldiers was their extreme docility and also their gratitude for small favours. One evening a hundred men turned up at the School—mostly cases of frost-bite, still able to walk—whose wounds had not been dressed for several days. The authorities said they could have no food till noon next day. It was obviously not part of our duty to make up for deficiency in the enemy commissariat, so the men went to sleep supperless. They accepted this arrangement quite contentedly, and were prepared to go breakfastless also, but common humanity made us provide them next morning with tea and some bread, for which they were extremely grateful. A similar instance occurred a few days later. We were asked one evening to take into our main hospital thirty men who had just arrived and for whom no other accommodation could be found. They could only be accommodated with hay on bare boards in three small rooms, and were told they would get no rations till dinner-time next day. The accommodation they accepted with satisfaction, the information about food with stoicism, and they were proportionately grateful when our hospital cook managed to provide them with a supper of thin soup. This is one

of the topsy-turvy things which gave a comic side to the tragedy of our last months in Serbia. Here were Austrian soldiers contentedly accepting remarkably short commons and sleeping on the floor, while Serbian patients and orderlies were getting ordinary rations and sleeping in comfortable beds under their very eyes. These soldiers were nearly all Hungarian, chiefly Magyars, as were most of the regiments we had to deal with during the months we worked under the Austrians.

For the first three weeks all the prisoners who were in the place when the Austrians came were left *in statu quo* to continue the work on which they were engaged, and those in our hospitals remained working there as before. Then came an order that all the prisoners were to go, and they left for Austria, expecting to have a fortnight's furlough at home before being sent again to the front. In their place we were then given Hungarian soldiers to do the work of the hospital, and they occupied the same position as the former prisoners, being put under the command of the Heads of the Mission, and requiring passes signed by us to allow them to go into the town. If they misbehaved we punished them. Thus, when on one occasion a soldier came in drunk, he was promptly reprimanded by the Professor and locked up in a spare room, a proceeding which was fully approved by the authorities when reported to them. This condition of things also seemed rather topsy-turvy, but the soldiers accepted it quite as a matter of course. They were very pleased to be out of the fighting line and quite willing to work for us. Most of them knew no German or Serbian, but the Heads of the Unit knew a

little Hungarian, which is always a sure way to win Magyar devotion. As the regiments moved on, the soldiers were changed—an awkward proceeding for the work of the hospital. A party of Roumanians from Transylvania stayed longest, probably because they were of less use in the campaign than the Magyars. They spoke only Roumanian, but they were excellent workers. When they heard they were to go, the corporal in charge implored the Professor, in a fervid mixture of Roumanian with broken Magyar and Serb, to intercede with the authorities that they might stay on ; but intercession was in vain.

It was noticeable that among the soldiers we came across, in whatever capacity, we found no shade of animosity towards ourselves as representatives of an enemy country. Their interest, indeed, in the war seemed often of the slightest, and universally their one desire was that the war should end, so that they could return to their homes. Against the Italians there did appear sometimes a slight expression of bitterness, but with regard to all the other Allies, including the Serbs, there seemed a curious absence of animosity. Most of the troops we saw in Serbia had come from either the Russian or the Italian front and were heartily sick of fighting. Just before Christmas there was a very general belief among the Austrians that peace was near at hand. Probably it was peace based on Austro-German success that was expected, but we do not think that the rank and file of the Austrian army cared much about the terms on which peace would be made so long as it were peace indeed. One evening we took into our hospital a party of soldiers, for whom there was no room elsewhere, who

arrived in a state of extreme excitement, declaring that a truce of three months had been agreed on by all the belligerents ; they said their officer had called them up and read it to them from a newspaper as official. In consequence they fully believed they were on their way home. So strong was their conviction and so great their jubilation that they infected the members of the Mission, and made us half believe that some great and, it was to be hoped, satisfactory event had occurred. Next day, alas, there was disillusion.

With regard to the behaviour of the Austrian soldiers to the Serbian population; that was undoubtedly good, as far as observation in a limited area went. There were practically no stories of atrocities or deeds of violence, and little serious pillaging, in spite of the fact that half-starved soldiers were for many weeks wandering about the neighbourhood and constantly begging for food at villas and cottages. With the soldiers in the town the village women drove a thriving trade in apples and, I fear, also in rakija, the native spirit. Indeed, in many ways, the place seemed so little changed that it was difficult sometimes to realise that it was in the hands of invaders. There were the same grey uniforms in the market-place and streets, the wearers loafing about and fraternising with the peasants ; there was little to show that whereas formerly they were the conquered now they were the conquerors. In our hospital Serbian and Austrian patients were on perfectly friendly terms. This friendly behaviour on the part of the soldiers was the more surprising because, as already mentioned, they were largely Magyars, and between Magyars and

Serbs is long-standing animosity ; also there is no doubt that in the first invasion of Serbia the perpetration of terrible atrocities stained the fair fame of Hungary.

Our own part of Serbia seemed wholly in the hands of the Hungarians. The Hungarian flag—the materials for which were begged from our hospital stores—floated over the “Stadt Komando,” and official notices were headed “K. u. K.” (“Kaiserlich und Königlich”), not “K. K.” (“Kaiserlich Königlich”), as is usual in Austria. The insertion of the word *and* seems in some way satisfactory to Hungarian national pride, probably as marking more separation between Empire and Monarchy than is denoted by the closer proximity of “K. K.”! All the principal officials were Hungarians with the exception of Prince Lobkowitz, who was Bohemian, and who won the good opinion of all, Britons and Serbs included, by his kindness, energy, and uprightness. Many were civilians holding commissions, combatant or medical. An “Oberlieutenant,” who did a great deal of the real work of the place after Prince Lobkowitz left, the next commandant speaking only Magyar, was a lawyer from Budapest. Most of the medical officers, of whom we had several in succession, had left civilian practices. In the officers, as in the soldiers, we found no signs of animosity towards England ; they still seemed to look on the English with the friendly sentiments which have always been felt towards us by the Hungarians, and to consider the war as an interlude, which, when it was over, would leave things just as they were before. The officers, especially the doctors, struck us as being efficient and hard-working, and as trying to

do the best for the place and the inhabitants that circumstances allowed.

The Austro-Hungarians showed themselves quite ready to work with the few Serbian officials who remained in the place. The mayor had fled, but an elderly Serb doctor, Dr. G——, was made mayor in his place, while the energetic and capable Mr. Mika Markovitch became vice-mayor. The commissariat arrangements were carried out by the mayor and vice-mayor. Prices were fixed officially for articles like bread, milk, and eggs; if these were exceeded the sellers were liable to punishment. Bread and milk could only be bought on a ticket, and when milk became scarce, as it often did after Christmas, the tickets were given as far as possible only to families with children. But as the prices fixed were much lower than what would have been the market rate in such a time of scarcity, the peasants used to sell their milk and other produce surreptitiously, and those who had money and knew where to go could generally get what they required.

The hospitals were supplied from a central magazine in charge of our former commissaire at the Drzhavna, Mr. Jovanovitch, who was made head commissaire by the Austrians. His knowledge of languages, especially of Magyar, made him of great value to the Hungarian conquerors, and he carried out his very onerous duties under the new conditions with the same zeal and industry which he had always shown under the old. Peasants were required to bring a certain portion of their milk to the magazine every day; they were at liberty afterwards to sell the remainder.

The Hungarians certainly attempted to do some-

thing with regard to sanitation, and waged a fairly successful war against the louse, the dreaded carrier of typhus. The Thresh disinfector remained at the Drzhavna and was kept busily at work. There was, however, often a great deal of muddle ; the commissariat arrangements for the troops were certainly defective, and if we had suffered from orders and counter-orders under the Serbs, this was still worse under the Austrians. Perhaps the fact that the railways were largely in the hands of the Germans had something to do with many of the difficulties which arose. If the Hungarians are unwilling foes of the English, as we think they are, they are quite as obviously unwilling allies of the Germans. It was generally easy to find a common topic of interest in conversing with Hungarian officers, and that consisted in making scathing remarks about the Germans ! Of course a common subject of conversation was the Geneva Convention and its application. We were always assured that they intended to adhere to the Geneva Convention, but we were surprised to find how little was known of the terms of this Convention by all the Austro-Hungarians with whom we came in contact. The Medical Director-General of the Austrians in Serbia visited us, and we overheard him telling another officer that all members of the missions would be interned until the end of the war. This was clearly a contravention of the Geneva Convention, and in all discussions with the Austrians on this subject we continued to point this out. The general opinion of the Austro-Hungarians at Vrantse seemed to be that we should not be required to treat Austrians, but that we should either be kept till the end of the war to

treat Serbians in Serbia or be sent to look after the prisoners in a prisoners' camp somewhere in Austria-Hungary. Later the prevalent opinion appeared to be that all the women would be sent home, but all the men, medical or otherwise, would be retained throughout the war. The best informed of our Austro-Hungarian friends was Captain Dr. Otto P——, an elderly Hungarian, who before the war had practised as a civilian surgeon at Pancsova and who became our medical commandant after Colonel Pick's departure. To his courtesy, practical good sense, and kindly feeling towards us we were much indebted during our three months under his charge. The following incident illustrates the curious ideas about English government which are prevalent even among intelligent and well-informed Hungarians. After a long conversation which the Professor had with him one day on the subject of the politics and history of Hungary, he said suddenly, "Well, you English treat your colonies so badly!" "How so," said the Professor. "Well, you do not allow them to buy or sell except with the mother country," was his answer; and nothing Mr. Berry could say would move him from his fixed belief that such were the trade relations between England and her colonies. Equally surprising ignorance about circumstances nearer home was displayed by another Hungarian doctor of good family and education, who made the common but ridiculous assertion that "the Serbs had killed the Austrian Archduke." He seemed much interested and surprised to learn that Cabrinovitch, Prinzip, and the other assassins were *Austrian* Slav subjects, and not Serbs, as the Austrians endeavour to make the world believe.

The most dramatic figure, however, that we came across was a young Magyar priest, who in uniform looked very unpriestlike. He came to us with a message from the Austrian Red Cross about our correspondence and quite took the British missions under his protection. He had studied in Italy, spoke Italian perfectly, and English and French tolerably. He held open-air services and was an eloquent preacher, preaching first in Magyar, then translating into German, and finally saying a few words in English if any members of British missions happened to be present. He studied Serbian customs and learnt Serbian airs. He made some of our nurses teach him "It's a long way to Tipperary," and sang it at the officers' mess. Even the upper-class Serbians, who not unnaturally felt very bitterly towards the Austrians, and generally declined to meet them socially, made an exception in his case, freely recognising his spirit of toleration and genuine Christianity. One day he told the following pretty story from his experience :—During the Austrian advance, when with his regiment as chaplain, the priest, with some of the officers, spent the night in a lonely cottage where there was only a woman with a little boy five or six years old. The mother, who had been told to expect terrible treatment from the Austrians, was in great trepidation, and when the priest called the child, petted him and gave him chocolate, she watched in terror from a corner. "Dushan, will you go with me to Hungary?" said the priest in fun. Dushan looked uncertain, but, seeing his mother waving an energetic negative from her corner, thought it wise to say "No!" Next morning the Austrians left, but

they had not gone far when they heard little feet pattering behind and the small Dushan appeared carrying some postcards. "These are from father, who is a prisoner," he cried, "and mother says I may go with you." But, alas, they were going, not to Hungary, but to Montenegro, so a soldier was despatched to take Dushan home.

Some time later, however, the priest got a few weeks' leave and started for Hungary. At Belgrade he bethought him of Dushan, and he asked the commandant for leave to take the child with him. The commandant was inclined to jeer, but gave the required permission. So the priest went to the village, fetched Dushan, and dropped him at the prisoners' camp at Temesvar, to the huge delight of both father and child, picking him up on his return journey and restoring him to his mother. This story, which those who know the narrator have no difficulty in believing, has appeared in Hungarian papers.

As the result of our intercourse with Austro-Hungarians several points made a deep impression on our minds. The first, and a very obvious one, is the enormous power of the German and Austrian military system. Except for this power in the hands of an autocratic Government, it is hardly conceivable that Austria-Hungary would be fighting against us now. With the conflicting nationalities of which the Empire is composed, and with the rooted discontent with the Government that exists so widely, public opinion cannot be made to order, as seems to be done so successfully in Germany.

No one can mix with Austro-Hungarian soldiers without feeling what a purely artificial thing for them

in many respects this war is. The Serbian soldier has his heart in the war—he knows he is fighting for the independence of his country; the history of his ancestors, the deeds of national heroes, are living influences even to the illiterate peasant. The Czech, the Croat, the Slovak have no such impetus—their national history is in abeyance. With the Magyar it is different—his national history is a very living influence; but, though Hungary may have to lose some of her territory if a loser in the war, somehow the spirit which must have characterised the Magyars in their revolt against Austria last century seems quite absent now.

It is from a philosophical point of view an extraordinary spectacle to see these masses of men, torn from their homes for months, now running into years, engaged in the murderous work of killing others, witnessing horrible scenes of carnage affecting their friends and comrades, with no great enthusiasm to carry them on, and preserving the same kindly, friendly spirit to both friends and foes which characterised them before the war. They are like a flock of sheep driven they know not where: "Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die." This is a quotation which may apply to both sheep and heroes, and indeed the Austro-Hungarian soldier is a kind of mixture of both.

Another question which often presented itself was, What is the real psychology and explanation of the atrocities committed in this war in accordance with the German theory of "frightfulness"? There is indubitable evidence that horrible atrocities were practised at Shabatz and elsewhere in the first invasion of Serbia by Austrian troops of Magyar and German nationality. It is admitted that on subse-

quent invasions there were no atrocities, and, as already mentioned, the Magyars we came across behaved in what may be described as an exemplary manner. This was certainly not due to the presence of restraint, for they were constantly to be met with wandering about without officers. It decidedly tends to show that the responsibility for atrocities is to be laid at the doors of those in authority more than on the perpetrators, and that if the "*bête humaine*" is present in most natures it requires not merely letting loose, but considerable prodding, before it comes out of its hidden dwelling-place and displays its horrors.

The want of enthusiasm about the war in the Austro-Hungarians was not due to depression caused by a sense of failure ; on the contrary, the opinion that the Central Empires were winning seemed universal, though probably the victory would not be all that the Germans looked for at the beginning. We ourselves left Austria-Hungary very depressed on this score, and were much relieved to find a very different complexion put upon the case in Switzerland. But, though expecting victory and longing for peace, there did not seem to be much satisfaction in contemplating the probable result of the war. A paramount Germany was certainly not regarded as an unmixed blessing. We are not sure that Hungary is even very keen on keeping Serbia, supposing that this is to be Hungary's share of the spoils of victory. The Magyars know that every increase in the Slav population of the monarchy means a smaller proportion of Magyar race, and will tend to lessen Magyar power when the political emancipation of the Hungarian Slavs comes, as come it must.

F. M. D. B.

CHAPTER XVI.

CAPTIVITY.

Sense of Failure—Reorganisation of Work—The Kitchen Staff—Rations—The Farmyard—A Cold Spell—Burst Pipes—Mr. Jones—Our Commissaire—Departure of Patients—Walks in the Neighbourhood—A Serbian Cottage—Condition of Peasants—Refugees in Vrn̄ac—Commissariat Arrangements—English Lessons—Slaves—Our Isolation—Prevalence of Rumours—Lectures—Christmas Tree—Theatricals—A Serbian Testimonial of Appreciation of our Work.

ON November 1st, when, as recorded in Chap. XIV., our Austrian prisoners were for the first time marched away, we were allowed to retain one to work in the hospital, and the "brand snatched from the burning" was the sergeant at the School. On my way home after wishing the others good-bye I called in at the School to arrange about the accommodation for the Serbian boys who were to replace the prisoners ; and the sergeant accompanied me on to the Terapia. He was delighted to be back at his beloved School, and was much pleased at the cordial manner in which the Serbian patients had welcomed his return. Noting that I looked sad, he said : " You have no cause for fear ; no one will harm anybody in the Mission ; our people always respect the Red Cross." " It is not that which troubles me," I replied ; " I am thinking of the fate of our prisoners, of the fate of Serbia, and how this is the end of all our work." And as I looked at the familiar view—a view I never saw without delight—the great grey house standing alone and the

beautiful hills behind sloping up to the forests of Gotch—it appeared to me as if everything bore a different aspect and the word *Failure* seemed written over the whole scene. We had organised a great hospital scheme, had trained men each to do his own special work, and just as the real work began, the work we had been waiting for, the work for which we had prepared, we saw everything collapse and our trained workers taken away. And Serbia—Serbia whom we loved both for her own sake and as an Ally in the great cause for which we are all working, Serbia with her glorious past and her heroic present—was prostrate under the heel of the invader with none to rescue or to help !

A minor but rather acutely-felt item of failure was the unfinished slaughter-house. If the Serbians had only been more expeditious over the preliminaries, or if the Austrians had but postponed their arrival for a fortnight, it would have been completed, and at least have remained a permanent achievement to be utilised at some future time ; but, alas, the slaughter-house stood without a roof and with the unused materials stacked around. These materials would undoubtedly shortly vanish, and the chances of the slaughter-house ever being completed seemed small.

We found it difficult to buckle to and continue our work again under the changed and depressing conditions, but most of the Unit rose splendidly to the occasion. Work was reorganised, and many members took on jobs which they had certainly not come out to do. In the place of about thirty prisoners at the Terapia there remained only eleven, but as we had now only two hospitals to work, several members of

the Unit had time on their hands. Our laundry staff had all gone, but the Sister in charge, Sister Davies, nobly threw herself into the breach, and for the rest of our time at Vrintse worked in the laundry herself with a couple of Austrians and a variable number of other assistants. Other sisters undertook different departments of housework hitherto performed by prisoners, such as cleaning of corridors, stairs, bedrooms, and baths.

In losing Julius we were left without a cook for the staff. Poor Julius ! He was one of the few prisoners who showed any signs of satisfaction at the prospect of falling into the hands of the Austrians. Fond as he was of us, I think he would have been quite pleased to see the grey uniforms of the conquerors appear at the gates and would have cheerfully marched away with them. Instead of that he had to march off to Italy, and with a lame leg to boot !

It is said that when the Hour strikes, the Man appears ! This was true of our kitchen emergency, for a culinary genius stepped into the breach. Providence had sent him to Serbia in the same ship as some members of our Unit, with diplomatic papers to the Serbian Government in his pocket and an open mind as to his further career. He came on to Vrintse as a visitor, was annexed by the Mission, and became an orderly. His previous experience in cookery only amounted to a few amateur experiments, but he gave such evidence of talent that he was made Chef with a kitchen staff under his orders. Second in command was Dr. Inglis, who by the loss of the *Merkur* had been thrown out of medical employment. Excellent as a cook, she was too soft-hearted and anxious to see

everyone well fed to bear sway satisfactorily in a prisoners' kitchen ! Mrs. Sandeman, official kitchen-maid, refugee from another mission, forgetting that somewhere across the waters she had a staff of servants and a home of her own, peeled potatoes as if to the manner born, and was up daily at unearthly hours to give early risers their breakfasts. Dr. McLaren, also shorn of much of her medical work, washed dishes vigorously, and was warranted to get more plates and cups clean in a given time than anyone in Serbia. One of her admirers wrote the following verse, which was wrapped up in a Christmas cracker :—

“ Dr. Ada sadly wishes
Surgeon's part to play,
But instead she washes dishes
All the livelong day ;
And so long the foe at Nish is
Thus she's bound to stay ! ”

Others helped in the kitchen at times—Miss Dickinson, whose activities in marketing were sadly restricted, owing to there being little in the market to buy, and Mrs. Eldred, who came in the intervals of working in a dispensary where there was little to dispense. The kitchen staff, and more especially the Chef, had to bear the brunt of many attacks and to keep vigilant watch and ward. What with nurses who considered they were within their rights in laying hands on anything they fancied for their patients, what with zealous patriots who thought the stores ought to be eaten up as rapidly as possible so that they should not fall into the clutches of the Austrians, what with enthusiastic philanthropists who hungered to scatter sugar and salt broadcast among the peasants, the

position of guardian of the stores was no sinecure ; and to join the kitchen staff was certainly not the way to make a bid for popularity !

The Austrians sent us daily rations—black bread, varying in amount from one-half to one-fifth of a loaf per head ; meat, frequently consisting of the nearly meatless ribs of some ancient cow or ox, accompanied by portions of those organs sold under the cryptic term of “ lights,” which looked more suitable for a physiology demonstration than for the kitchen. Sometimes we received coffee or haricot beans, besides various little screwed-up paper packets containing minute quantities of whatever delicacies the magazine possessed—such as tea, sugar, or a few leaves of herbs or vegetables. But with the help of Heinz’s beans and Mackonochie rations wonderful stews were produced from these unpromising ingredients ; while as to our puddings, their fame spread far and wide. Members of other units used to beg for invitations on “ pudding days.” But on inquiring for the recipe of some *chef d’œuvre* the ingredients were generally found to be scraps of stale black bread, Benger’s food, with a flavouring of jam or apples !

The Christmas dinner was a triumph. It was rumoured beforehand that none of the ordinary ingredients of a plum pudding were to be had, not even the plums. All the same a pudding not unworthy of Buszard was produced, which, if it was slightly lacking in plums, was rich in coins, thimbles, and other keepsakes ; while the turkey, with its concomitants, was “ *haute cuisine* ” indeed !

It was not only the members of the Unit, however, who were moved out of their respective grooves. In

view of possible hard times ahead, we had, before the Austrians arrived, set up quite a little farmyard—sheep, a goat, a couple of calves, and a goodly collection of chickens and geese. Under the new *régime*, for fear of thieves by night, the quadrupeds slept in a small room beside the kitchen, while one of the bathrooms was devoted to the use of the poultry! Food for the beasts was scarce, especially when the snow was on the ground, but Benger, besides being the foundation of puddings, pastry, cakes, and sauces, came in also to supplement the scanty diet of the calves. Benger's food had been sent out in large quantities. Serbians are so far like English in that they do not take readily to unaccustomed diet, and few of the articles of food we had brought out were appreciated, jam being the chief exception; consequently there was much Benger in hand when hard times came, and, like other things and people, it also served many purposes for which it had not been intended.

Until November 16th we had beautiful weather, and we rejoiced greatly at this when we thought of the many fugitives on the mountains of Serbia and Montenegro. But during the night of the 17th there was a severe blizzard, and in the morning the snow lay thick upon the ground. A few days previously Captain von F——, then the chief medical officer at Vrnitse, had gone to Rashka in our motor driven by Sava, an interned Austrian Serb, who had been with us many months as chauffeur and mechanic, and who, since the departure of the prisoners, was the only man who could run the engines at the Terapia. Captain von F—— promised, on the "Ehrenwort" of

an Austrian officer, that Sava should be sent back in two days ; but in spite of this " word of honour " he did not return for over a week, and then it was not thanks to, but in spite of, von F——, who wanted to take him further. The motor, of course, we did not see again.

The loss of Sava meant that during this bitter weather we could have neither electric light nor hot water in the pipes and radiators. In consequence of this, and also of the fact that the pipes had been laid in as superficial a manner as possible, the water throughout the house froze and produced innumerable fractures. There was a frost nightly of over 20° F., and the water in our bedroom jugs froze hard and could not be thawed for about ten days. The stoves in the kitchens and a small stove each in the wards and common-room were our only means of heating. We were certainly somewhat chilly. But what were our discomforts compared with the sufferings of the fugitives on the mountains ! Nobody was the worse in health on account of the cold, and spirits were kept up manfully.

After the frost came the thaw, and the ceilings poured down water for several days, for pipes had burst in innumerable places, and we had neither means nor men to repair them. At last a plumber was discovered in the person of one of our Austrian patients and the floods were stayed !

If some members of the Unit found their work diminished, others found that it was increased. This was perhaps especially the case with Mr. Jones, our only remaining orderly since the kitchen had claimed the Chef. " Little Brother " Jones had the super-

vision of all the outdoor work ; he was also at the beck and call of everybody within doors. When things went wrong, as for instance in the case of the pipes, he was blamed as a matter of course, sharing in this respect the prerogatives of the Heads of the Unit ! He was taskmaster over all the Austrian orderlies, and he had, in common with several of the nurses, the faculty of being able quite effectively to communicate with and order about persons between whom and himself there were not even the rudiments of a common language. This had the advantage that it did not matter what language the men talked, and he got on equally well with relays of Austrians who talked successively Czech, Hungarian, and Roumanian. Jones was in fact both the scapegoat and the bulwark of the Mission. The writer of the following Christmas motto regarded him in the latter light :—

“ ‘ Little Brother ’ Jones’s task
Is to do whate’er we ask.
If the men their labours shirk,
‘ Little Brother ’ makes them work.
If the house is in a plight,
‘ Little Brother ’ sets it right.
Everyone who sighs or groans
Flies to ‘ Little Brother ’ Jones ! ”

Another person who may be regarded as a “ bulwark of the Mission ” was our sub-commissaire, Mr. Krsmanovitch, who remained behind when the commissaire departed in November, and during the remainder of our stay at Vrn̄tse exercised the duties of commissaire for the Terapia, the School, and, after the British Red Cross Mission left, the Zlatibor. His invariable tact, cosmopolitan training, and thorough

knowledge of German stood him in good stead under difficult circumstances, and he got on with everybody, friends and enemies alike.

With the School we had little to do after the first few weeks, but our hospital kitchen cooked the food for its very variable number of inmates, and it was the commissaire's business to arrange for the supplies. Thus when a party of men arrived at the School, which they generally did suddenly and unexpectedly, it was the commissaire on whom devolved the duty of obtaining their rations from the magazine. When orders came, as they often did, that twenty or thirty Terapia patients must leave in less than twenty-four hours, it was the commissaire who had to see that their clothes were forthcoming, prepare lists of names, and fill in particulars galore. Generally at the last moment a counter-order arrived and the patients remained. Then later on fresh papers had to be made out. Thus did the Austrians thoughtfully keep the commissaire's mind employed, so that he had not much time to dwell on the melancholy circumstances around.

We had been told quite early in the Austrian occupation that the British hospitals would be quickly evacuated and that as soon as the patients could travel they would be moved on. But, owing probably to difficulties of transport, the removal of the patients was often delayed. Still, little by little, our hospitals emptied. The patients generally left in parties at variable intervals. The Austrians sent up wagons drawn by horses instead of the patient Serbian oxen. The wagons were drawn up outside the large doors of the ward, and those patients who were unable to walk were carried out in their beds and were sometimes

transported, beds and all, to a hospital at Krushevatz, the beds being sent back a few days later. Those were sad days on which we lost our patients ; most had been with us since the middle of October, some much longer. Though some went primarily to another hospital, we knew all were going ultimately into captivity, and what that would mean for them, who could tell !

After the departure of the Roumanian orderlies, early in January, there were but few soldiers left in Vrintse, and we were allowed only four as servants, all of whom were required either in the machine-house or for outdoor work. We had therefore no Austrian orderlies in the wards, but a nice Serb boy, named Christopher, formerly a patient, became an excellent orderly, and was assisted by another convalescent, a youth from a mountain village near Gotch. Owing chiefly to shortage of wood, it was impossible to keep the big ward warm, and when the number of patients had sufficiently diminished they were all moved into the small wards, where Sisters Hammond, Hall, and Thomas did nursing with intervals of housework.

As our hospitals became emptier and work diminished we were able to explore the country and to profit by the wonderful " Riviera " weather which we had, with occasional intervals of cold and wet, from the beginning of December onwards. Beautiful walks, long or short, were to be had in every direction, and frequently we took tea or lunch out on the mountains. Ten minutes' climb up the hill behind the Terapia enabled one to obtain an extensive view over the surrounding country, stretching away on one side to

the mountains on the Bulgarian frontier and on the other to the hills about Chachak, which the tide of the Austrian invaders reached in 1914, and whence it was then rapidly and decisively thrown back. Half an hour's walk over rough grass or along a deeply-rutted track led to the forests of Gotch, which consisted chiefly of beech trees, the stems tall and straight as pines and devoid of branches except near the top. Every valley opened up new beauties and topics of interest. There were many little cemeteries to be found, often on the tops of hills and away from any habitations. The flags that waved over the graves of soldiers were a very effective decoration, and on the tombstones there were often quaint drawings—sometimes a rude portrait of the deceased, sometimes representations of weapons or musical instruments.

Serbian mountain villages consist generally of scattered cottages, some of which may be a mile apart one from the other. Almost every cottage possesses a wide verandah which gives it a very picturesque aspect (Fig. 16). The interior of many of the cottages struck us as poverty-stricken and comfortless in the extreme ; though probably that was by no means the opinion of the inhabitants, the standard of comfort in those regions being very different from that existing in our own country. A cottage consisted frequently of but two rooms, the outer one a sort of ante-room containing very little except what looked like mere lumber. The inner one was the living room, with earth or possibly brick floor, small windows not made to open, a wide chimney with the fire on the hearth beneath. The furniture comprised a large bed made of planks and covered with the many-coloured rugs

of the country, often dingy from age, some pots and pans, a wooden stool or two, and sometimes a rough table. On the wall hung the clothes of the occupants—like the rugs, generally dingy and ragged from the effects of time. A not uncommon addition to the furniture was a loom, which took up a great deal of the available space and which was used to weave the materials for the clothes and rugs of the family. However poor and uninviting the house, the occupants always received an English visitor with the unembarrassed courtesy characteristic of the Slav peasant, and it was difficult to escape from the poorest hovel without having some form of hospitality pressed upon one, usually the invariable rakija.

There did not seem to be any great want of food among the peasants during the time we remained at Vrn̄tse. There were plenty of animals to be seen about—cows, goats, and even pigs; but in many cases peasants had had to give up some of their animals to the Austrians, only a receipt in paper being given in return, and occasionally one came across some very piteous stories of the loss of animals on which the owner's livelihood had depended. Certain articles of food, however, were badly needed and were quite unobtainable, especially salt and sugar.

Another opportunity afforded by our comparative leisure was that of making and cultivating the acquaintance of Serbians of the upper classes more than had been possible heretofore. Vrn̄tse, being essentially a summer health resort, had few permanent residents of the better classes, but many of the refugees from the invasions of 1914 still remained, and since the beginning of the present invasion fugitives had

been arriving in great numbers, so that every available room in the place was occupied. A great number of these last refugees had had to escape hurriedly, and found themselves without change of clothes, blankets, or any of the ordinary necessities of life. As there was practically nothing of this kind to be bought, their condition was often very pitiable. We still had considerable stores of clothing when the Austrians arrived, and these proved of great value to many destitute families. The Austrians did not interfere in any way with our possession of these stores or with our distribution of them as we liked.

Scarcity of food also pressed heavily on many of the refugees. The supply of bread was at times very short. The black bread supplied to the hospitals and the British missions came from Kraljevo, and, though there were often rumours of cessation of supply, we had only one day on which no bread came, and as a rule we had sufficient quantity. But bread for the civilian population, which was baked in Vrnitse, was often very scarce ; the amount allowed per head was very small, and sometimes there was none to be had for two or three days. Many articles of food, such as flour, sugar, salt, and fresh vegetables, were scarcely to be had at any price. Some of the residents who had been a considerable time in the place had laid in stores of flour and other things and were thus able to supplement the official allowance. Soon after the Austrian occupation a proclamation was issued requiring everybody to make a return of the stores in their possession. How far these returns were made we cannot say, but we never heard of any stores belonging to private families being requisitioned.

Peasants used frequently to ask us to sell sugar and salt, or to exchange these for eggs or other commodities, but this we always refused to do, partly because our store of these articles was now not large and partly because we thought such proceedings would be likely to lead to trouble with the authorities. One of the other Missions which had a considerable quantity of sugar exchanged this for eggs on a large scale. The result was that the supply of eggs to the market became suddenly arrested. The Austrian authorities looked for the cause of this phenomenon and, finding what was going on, confiscated all the stores of the offending Mission—a somewhat high-handed proceeding—and doled them out subsequently in small quantities with their rations.

Many of the Serbian ladies wished to learn English, and several of the members of the Unit employed their spare time in giving English lessons, sometimes learning Serbian themselves in return. Many people in Vrn̄tse were living in one room, though possessors of good houses elsewhere. Few knew whether their houses were still standing, or whether, if the houses were still there, any of their belongings still remained in them. Among the Serbians hospitality goes hand in hand with patriotism, and the two are elemental virtues which never vanish in spite of the most adverse conditions. One could not pay a visit even in these hard times, still less give a lesson, but coffee and dainty cakes, made out of the hostess's scanty store of precious sugar and flour, were brought out and pressed upon the visitor. Even "slavas" were still celebrated, though on a simplified scale, and many were the slavas we attended. The slava is an institution peculiar to

Serbia, and said not to exist in any of the other Slav countries. It dates from the days of the conversion of the Serbs to Christianity. Each warrior who became Christian was baptised in the name of a patron saint, and this saint became the patron saint of the family ; the slava is celebrated yearly on the day of that particular saint. The slava begins with a religious ceremony, but continues as a sort of prolonged "at-home." Friends are expected to call, and when they arrive are offered a peculiar cake, the chief ingredients of which are whole wheat and sugar ; it appears to have been in its origin a sacrificial offering to the dead. With this cake glasses of wine are usually handed ; these should be merely sipped and returned to the tray, and should not be retained and emptied, as is often done by the unwary or uninitiated foreigner. Various relays of little cakes follow, though cake is too solid a name for the ethereal morsels of confectionery of immense variety which are met with everywhere and are indeed a speciality of the country.

Many of us felt that these latter weeks at Vrintse enabled us to gain an insight into Serbian life and character which we should not otherwise have obtained. One could not but admire deeply the unselfishness, generosity, and cheerfulness under misfortune displayed by very many of the refugees. One lady, the wife of the vice-mayor, was a very striking personality. She was tall, with a face of the type of a Luini Madonna, and looked her best in the peasant dress she wore in her mountain home in Gotch. She felt the condition of her country most intensely, and whenever any allusion was made to the Austrians or to the state of Serbia, she would burst into strains of impassioned

eloquence reminding one of a prophetess of old. One could imagine that she would be able to move a great audience profoundly and to spur men on to deeds of heroism and daring. Her husband was more cosmopolitan ; he could recognise good even in the enemy, but he was no less patriotic. Although remaining at home and serving his country by working loyally with the Austrians, his heart was with the fugitive Serbian army, and when they return he will probably be one of the first to depart and join them.

It may be thought that, what with walks and picnics, slavas and visits to friends, as well as the friendly treatment we received from our captors, our period of captivity was more like a pleasant holiday than a painful ordeal ; and so from one point of view it was. But there was another side to the picture, and one which was very trying to most members of the Unit. Absence of any news from home, uncertainty about our own fate, whether we might not be retained as prisoners to the end of the war, were causes of much anxiety to most ; and the feeling that we were no longer in any way free agents, that, however well treated, we were really at the mercy of the conquerors, was not exactly pleasant. The last newspaper and letter received from England was dated October 3rd. Our position was indeed unprecedented in the experience of any of our party ! From the time that communication with Salonica had been cut off we were like people living in a little oasis of sunshine surrounded by a wall of impenetrable fog. Since the Austrian occupation the oasis had become smaller and the fog thicker. Krushevatz and Kraljevo were some twenty odd miles on either side of us, but they were



FIG. 25.—THE UNIT IN FANCY DRESS. CHRISTMAS, 1915.



FIG. 26.—HUNGARIAN STAFF AT THE "COMMANDO" IN VRNJATCHKA BANJA.
THE COMMANDANT IS ON THE EXTREME RIGHT.

within the fog, and for any knowledge that we possessed about what occurred in them they might have been as far removed as Paris or Petrograd. Only Rumour told of what went on, and Rumour saw wonderful visions through the mist. The capture of 100,000 English and French prisoners at Salonica, the fall of Metz and Strasburg, the evacuation of Belgium, were a few of the sensational items given out on apparently excellent authority, while the fall of Constantinople and the entrance of Roumania into the war on our own side were served up so frequently that they attracted no attention.

Sometimes Rumour displayed before our eyes a mirage of rescue! We heard of Italians in Montenegro and in Bosnia, listened to cannon one day and were assured that an Italian army was already in our valley.

Not content with creating fairy tales out of war news, Rumour showed the same activity in evolving them out of occurrences in the town itself. The vicemayor drove up one day to take some of the Mission for an outing; that evening the town said that he had commandeered the hospital stores by order of the Austrians and that their removal had been witnessed. A Serbian lady calling one Sunday morning stated that the Austrians were celebrating a great victory and that the park was all decorated. We avoided the town in consequence, but when a little later someone did go down, all that was to be seen in the way of decoration was the usual altar for outdoor service with a fir branch on either side. This appeared to be the only origin of the whole story.

Newspapers are often regarded as disseminators of lies, but their activity in this direction is nothing

compared with the way in which lies disseminate themselves when there are no newspapers !

The Serbian population buoyed itself up greatly with these rumours, for the vast majority of them were on their own side, but how far they really believed them is doubtful. The same rumours were served up daily with meals at the *Terapia*, and aided or impaired mental nutrition according to the type of mind receiving them. Few minds are strong enough wholly to disregard rumours and to avoid their raising false hopes in spite of the counsels of reason, but the effect is different on different minds. On some, whose tendency is towards chronic depression and worrying over the dark side of things, hope, even if false, may act as a narcotic or possibly tonic. With regard to the generality of minds, especially those prone to seize on and accept any good news presented, it is doubtful whether the consequent rise in spirits is not more than counterbalanced by the fall when the news proves untrue ; while for the type of mind which feels adversity acutely at first but possesses the faculty of accepting the inevitable and making the best of things, false hope means constant stirring up of the depths and a renewal of the struggle.

Various types of character were to be found in our Unit : some felt the situation acutely and oscillated between buoyant hope and deep despair ; others were philosophical and were ready to accept even internment for the rest of the war with equanimity. By way of occupying the minds of the Unit and the hours of the evening, the Professor introduced lectures, archæological, geological and historical, which were delivered both at the *Terapia* and at the villa occupied

by the 2nd Farmers. Mr. Parsons, Head of the latter Mission, joined in the game by giving some interesting lectures on India. Sports were also organised between the two Missions, but never came off on account of weather or mud ; but some matches of rounders were carried out successfully on a field sufficiently remote to avoid the attendance of the whole population of Vrintse at so unwonted a spectacle.

As Christmas approached we felt that, in spite of the present gloom and the uncertain future, it behoved us to do something to show, however feebly, what an English Christmas was like. So a small fir was dug up and placed in the ward, where it soon became a creditable Christmas-tree. It was decided that the Unit should all appear in fancy dress, and much ingenuity was displayed in the manufacture of costumes from a very limited choice of materials (Fig. 25). A good many Serbian friends were invited, and various children drifted in uninvited through the doors at the end of the ward. The proceedings began by carols sung by some dozen of the members, who processed round the darkened ward draped in white and swinging hurricane lamps. Then the Christmas-tree was lighted, visitors and patients received presents and were regaled on coffee and cakes. Everybody fraternised and was cheerful—Serbian visitors, Serb and Austrian patients, even the Roumanian soldier orderlies.

The Christmas dinner has already been alluded to ; after its stimulating influence the Unit sang "Auld lang syne" and other national airs with such zest that it was surprising that an Austrian patrol did not come round to ascertain the cause of the hilarity.

The Serbian Christmas Day occurs thirteen days later than ours. There are numerous strange customs connected with it, but most of these were left in abeyance on this melancholy Christmas of 1915. The Serbian Christmas Day, as far as we saw it, was much like a universal slava.

Our first attempt to cheer up the Serbians having proved encouraging, we proceeded a step further. The Professor bethought himself of an archaic farce, "Box and Cox," in which, in ancient days, he had won laurels on the family stage. From the depths of his retentive memory this ancient farce was exhumed and committed to writing. The Chef, who besides being a budding diplomatist was not unknown on the stage of a London theatre, condescended to take the part of Cox, while Mrs. Eldred, as the landlady, showed that she excelled in low comedy. A large Serbian audience with the two principal Austrian doctors and some of our patients thoroughly enjoyed seeing the Professor, who was generally regarded as a most staid and sober individual, desporting himself with the greatest gusto in rollicking farce. A short sketch of the piece was first read out in Serbian and German to the spectators that they might be able to follow the action.

The kitchen staff organised the next entertainment and gave some scenes from "Romeo and Juliet" and from "Richard III.," acted on a stage artistically draped with white sheets and hung with red carpets. Miss Hyett was a charming and sympathetic Juliet, and the Chef thrilled the audience as Clarence in the Tower by his histrionic talent.

Our third and last effort was perhaps the most

popular. We dramatised the story of Pepelyouga, the Serbian Cinderella, culled from Petrovitch's "Hero Tales and Legends of the Serbians," and wove into the drama allusions to other Serbian myths and national heroes. With the help of costumes and spindles borrowed or bought from peasants, and with Pirot carpets on the walls, the setting was made as typically Serbian as possible. Donna Quixota made her *début* as an actress in the *rôle* of the heroine. She threw herself into the part and quite scored a triumph, but it took some coaching and persuasion from the authoress and the producer (the Chef) to induce her to condescend to accept in a proper spirit any love-making from the Prince, or to sacrifice her democratic prejudices so as to appear in jewellery and silk attire. However, the fact that these were Serbian and not British mitigated the humiliation. Sister Griffin acted the part of a wicked step-sister with spirit, and Mrs. Eldred appeared as the cow, which in the Serbian story takes the place of the fairy godmother, and which was very successfully manufactured out of boards and an old felt rug. Five of the sisters looked charmingly pretty as a group of Serbian village maidens spinning on a supposed pasture, but we fear that the audience must have been secretly much amused at their methods of handling their spindles.

After this performance, which took place less than a fortnight before our departure, a very charming and very gratifying little ceremony took place. Our late commissaire, Mr. Boshko Markovitch,* stepped for-

* Mr. Markovitch, who had left Vrnac before the Austrians arrived, had not succeeded in effecting his escape. After having narrowly escaped being massacred by a band of Bulgarians, he fell in with Austro-Germans

ward and read a previously prepared address in which he expressed on the part of the inhabitants of Vrnitse their gratitude, friendship, and appreciation of our work in the warmest and most flattering terms. We were greatly pleased and touched by this quite unexpected tribute, more especially as we felt deeply that British help had been so largely unavailing, and that our own work had been cut short while we had as yet accomplished but little. The address was signed by all present, and though at the time of writing it is deposited in Vienna, we hope to receive it again and to keep it as permanent evidence that the work of our Mission was valued and appreciated by the people of Serbia.

and had been sent back to Vrnitse, where he was allowed to remain at liberty and live at home. Several other refugees, among them the stationmaster, also an old friend of the Mission, had similarly been sent home.

F. M. D. B.

CHAPTER XVII.

DEPARTURE FROM VRNTSE.

Austro-Hungarian "Olympus"—"Practical Joke Department" and the British Missions—"Wounded Allies" and "British Red Cross" Missions leave—Serbian Refugees ordered to leave—"Fairy Godmother Department"—A Cosmopolitan Tea—Last Days at the Terapia—Farewells at the Station—Reflections on the Fate of Serbia.

Most people have read the "First Hundred Thousand" and are familiar with the delightful description contained therein of the supreme military and civil authorities under the title of "Olympus" and of the three departments through which they work. "Olympus" is probably much the same all the world over, and when we read that description we felt it tallied very closely with our own experience of the higher authorities in Austria-Hungary. Of the "Round Game Department" we saw little; we were probably beneath its ken. We fancy, however, that the local authorities saw a good deal of it and were much harassed by its rules. But our position as prisoners offered an inviting field for the activities of the "Practical Joke Department," and one of which they did not neglect to take advantage. Ours was the first Mission which attracted their attention. There came a sudden order, which fell like a bolt from the blue, that the Berry Mission was to move on the following day to Krushevatz. We appealed to the local divinities and expressed our desire to remain with them till "Olympus" deigned to send us home

according to the Geneva Convention. The second in command, a Hungarian "Oberlieutenant," went over to Krushevatz and worked the oracle with such effect that next day the order was rescinded. In the meantime we had been packing feverishly, with the result that all the hospital stores were thoroughly mixed up and various articles vanished for ever—so the practical joke was not wholly without effect! But the "Practical Joke Department" having lost one victim looked round for another, and the order came that the British Red Cross Mission was to move to the same place in twenty-four hours. To make a hospital unit pack up and move their accumulations of a year in twenty-four hours was of the nature of quite a good practical joke, and its piquancy was increased by complete lack of information about what luggage and stores they would be allowed to take with them and what they would require at their next destination. Whether there was any available transport or any accommodation to be had at the end of the journey were matters that did not concern "Olympus." On the present occasion the local authorities ascertained that there was no accommodation in crowded Krushevatz, so the journey was postponed. In a few days an irate telegram was received: "Why has the British Mission not left?" So the harassed authorities hurried the Mission off to the station, whence they were sent back again, the railway authorities refusing to take them further. Baulked again, the "Practical Joke Department" ordered a smaller Mission to move. The Head of the Mission received permission to go to Krushevatz for the day to make arrangements. He went, but did not return. We

seemed to be surrounded by "bournes whence no traveller returns!" A little later, after two fruitless journeys to the station, the rest of the Mission departed, and they also disappeared behind the veil. The "Practical Joke Department" did not leave our colleagues of the British Red Cross Mission unmolested for long, and at last, after several vicissitudes, they were moved on to Krushevatz, their hospital being handed over to us. In the meantime the "Practical Joke Department" turned its attention to the Serbian refugees, and a peremptory order was published to the effect that everyone was to return to their homes at Belgrade or elsewhere by a certain day under pain of summary punishment. The unfortunate people, most of whom did not know whether they had any homes standing, went off accordingly, as many at least as the few trains running would take, with the result that they found that they could not get beyond the junction with the main line, and had either to camp out permanently at the little village of Stalatch or retire to the overcrowded town of Krushevatz. This at first very successful joke fell flat, however, after a time, probably because the local authorities did not show much zest in the game. Orders to go under threat of punishment, even with advertisement of a special train on a special day, attracted little attention, and people did not trouble even to go to the station. It is doubtful whether those special trains were not still waiting to materialise when the last British Mission—i.e., we ourselves—left Vrnstse.

If there is one thing which hurts a Hungarian it is that his country should appear inhospitable, even to

an enemy, and the way in which the unfortunate British Missions had been victimised and sent from "pillar to post" by the "deities of Olympus" gave our well-meaning Commandant (Fig. 26) and his assistants at Vrnstse much concern.

Thanks to their efforts the last two Missions—the 2nd Farmers and ourselves—left without any hitch, even without having to spend the day at the station, which was the minimum of discomfort attained hitherto. They much preferred, indeed, to be the mouthpiece of the third department, the little one of the three, the "Fairy Godmother Department," and we found that of this one also a counterpart exists in Austria-Hungary. One morning the regimental doctor drove up quite unexpectedly accompanied by an officer of high rank, a visitor to the place. With a face quite beaming with pleasure he informed us that a telegram had just been received saying that the whole Mission was to be sent direct to Vienna, and from there, he understood, straight home. There were still doubters at Vrnstse who told us that this too was a practical joke, and that the men at all events would be interned at Vienna. The day before we left, however, a postcard arrived from the Head of the Farmers' Mission—the last one to leave—saying the Mission had just reached Vienna and was leaving at once for Switzerland, so then all doubts were set at rest.

By what means the "Fairy Godmother Department" had been moved to take action for the British Missions we do not know. We had been told in the early days of our captivity by Prince Lobkowitz that negotiations were going on about us in high quarters,

but we had no definite intelligence either then or afterwards as to what was actually occurring. As soon as we heard that travelling to Belgrade was possible the Heads of the British units at Vrantse had held meetings to discuss the best method of proceeding to obtain our release according to the provisions of the Geneva Convention. A letter was drawn up to the Austro-Hungarian authorities and signed by the Heads of all the units. In this we pointed out that as our work had greatly diminished our presence could not be considered indispensable and the conditions which admitted of our retention had ceased to exist. We therefore prayed that the rules of the Geneva Convention might be carried out and our Missions be sent home. We also wrote to the International Red Cross Society at Geneva and to the American Ambassador at Vienna enclosing a copy of this letter. We received no reply to any of these communications, and we subsequently heard that one, at any rate, never reached its destination.

The day after we received the welcome news that we were to leave, we assisted at what seemed a strangely cosmopolitan gathering to occur in war time. We were invited by a neighbour, a retired Belgian diplomat, and his wife, German by birth but intensely Serbian in her sympathies, to meet the Hungarian Commandant, one of the doctors, and the priest, as well as one or two Serbian ladies. We listened to songs in various languages—Serbian, Magyar, Italian, and French—and afterwards our health was drunk, and we were wished God-speed in most cordial terms by both Allies and enemies. One of the latter made the somewhat naïve admission that while war lasted

it was necessary to speak well of certain countries and ill of others, but that whatever he might say he should always make a mental reservation in respect of the work done by English Missions in Serbia.

The "Fairy Godmother Department" did not insist on our departure taking place in twenty-four hours, but allowed us five days for preparation. During these five days the Terapia was in a veritable state of siege. As soon as it was known that the Mission was leaving Rumour became at once active and spread the report that there would be wholesale distribution of food and stores. The inhabitants of Vrnste and peasants from far and wide flocked to the gates. Many of the peasants brought brightly-coloured belts and stockings, their own hand-work, either as thank-offerings for help given in the past or in the hope of exchanging them for more desirable commodities. But, alas! we were able to do but little for these poor people. Our stock of clothes was by this time nearly exhausted, and we were not supposed to distribute either the remains of our food stores or the hospital appurtenances. Still, we managed to convey a fair number of blankets and also articles of food to various persons we knew to be destitute, which was winked at by the authorities.

The day of our departure saw one of those abrupt changes in the weather with which our year in Serbia had made us very familiar. Instead of the balmy air and almost summer sunshine of the day before, we woke to driving snow and icy wind. In spite of the unpleasant weather, crowds of friends came up to the Terapia to wish us good-bye; and we were loaded with supplies of delicious cakes and other articles of

food for the journey, besides various other souvenirs. Packing, having been much interfered with during the last few days by the stream of visitors, was still going on, and the general confusion was increased by the arrival of some Austrian officials to hold a court of inquiry on a very unpleasant incident which had occurred the night before. We had been told that we were to leave behind all our hospital stores, such as beds, bedding, and dressings, but might take all the surgical instruments as well as all personal belongings. Late the preceding afternoon Sister Davies packed the instruments in a large case and told our chauffeur in German to nail it up. No more was thought about the matter until late the same evening, when the packing-case was wanted for labelling and was nowhere to be found. The chauffeur was sent for and questioned. His knowledge of German was imperfect, and he alleged that the order as he understood it was that after fastening up the packing-case he was to put it outside the front door. This he had done, shut the door, and gone away. The packing-case had in the meantime completely disappeared, and, though looked for in outhouses and other possible places of concealment, it could not be found. It was too late to do anything that night, but early next day the authorities were informed of the loss. The hurried inquiry held by the military police before we left failed to elucidate the mystery. The most probable explanation seemed to be that some of the peasants, of whom there were many loitering about the grounds, carried off the heavy case in the dark, imagining it contained flour or other food ; it was a chest which at one time we had actually used for flour. That, how-

ever, is a mere hypothesis, and it is certainly more than doubtful whether we shall ever know what actually occurred.

About 10 o'clock there drove up to the door the same procession of vehicles which we had seen take away the other Missions. In front, two carriages; behind, wagons provided with hay to sit on. First came the big wagonette which had met us on our arrival and in which we had so often driven, but the familiar figures associated with it were all gone. The Major and his wife had returned to Belgrade some weeks before, the two horses, brown and grey, had been taken away by the Austrians, and the Bohemian coachman had gone with the other prisoners on the great retreat.

Anyone who liked was at liberty to go to the station, and a great many of our Serbian friends availed themselves of this permission. Some of the Hungarians came also; the Commandant was there himself, and the medical director, who was prevented coming by the unexpected arrival of a high functionary, sent an officer to bear his farewells. The Hungarians wished us good-bye before the train left, but the Serbians stayed with us to the end, many of them doubtless fervently wishing that they could accompany us.

As we steamed out, rejoicing in the prospect of so soon seeing home, friends and our own country untrodden by the invader, we thought with something like despair of those we were leaving behind. It was true that so far, in the parts under our own cognisance, the hand of the invader had not pressed with great harshness, but in spite of that the future was very black. What would these people we were leaving

behind do when the stock of money they had with them was exhausted? Nearly all of them had lost their means of livelihood and had no means of communication with the outside world. How would the country produce food for the population left in it, with its deserted villages, lack of labour, lack of animals, lack of seed for sowing? And where was help to be found? Was it from Hungary? In Hungary, we were told, prices were in some cases higher even than at Vrantse and rumblings of revolution were already beginning to be heard. It was not likely that the Hungarian people could help Serbia even if they wished to do so.

Still less was much to be looked for from the Austro-Hungarian Government. That Government, which had driven its people into a war in which they have no heart and from which they will derive no benefit, and which shoots down its subjects in cold blood when they withstand its oppressions, is not likely to play the part of a kindly foster-mother to Serbia.

And now behind the Austrian Government stands Germany—Germany, that wonderful example of scientific skill which has so moulded a nation as to produce a Frankenstein monster, without tenets of morality or sentiments of pity to hinder it in its march to its desired ends. Whenever the Serbians stand in the way of these ends they will get no pity.

Germany stands equally behind Bulgaria, who, with Austria, shares the administration of Serbian territory. If there is one thing the Serbians dread more than Austrian domination it is to be given over to the Bulgarians. While we were at Vrantse a rumour sprang up that the Hungarians were to be replaced by

Bulgarians, and this produced something akin to panic among the inhabitants. With the animosity caused by recent treachery added to hereditary enmity the bitterness against Bulgaria is indescribable, and Serbia in the hands of the Bulgarians might well be subjected to Balkan barbarities sharpened by German science.

Even if the Allies should advance at some future date and drive out Bulgarians and Austro-Germans, it is terrible to contemplate what would be the fate of the wretched Serbian population during the process, and doubtful, indeed, whether many would be left alive to welcome the deliverers.

Altogether, as we looked at the clouds which hung over Serbia it was difficult to see any trace of a "silver lining." And thus we left, half wishing we could have stayed, though knowing that if we had done so our efforts to help would have been of small avail.

F. M. D. B.



**FIG. 27.—PALACE CHAPEL OF THE TSAR LAZAR AT KRUSHEVATZ (14TH CENT.).
THE DETACHED BUILDING ON THE LEFT IS MODERN.**



FIG 28.—SERBIAN COTTAGE DECORATED WITH FIGURES OF NATIONAL HEROES.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE JOURNEY HOME AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Arrangements for Food and Luggage—Our Guards—Krushevatz—Hanoverian Soldier—Belgrade—A Friendly German—Budapest—Vienna—Detention at Bludenz—Reception at Zürich—Courtesy of the French—Southampton—Our Year Over—*Personnel* of the Unit—Units in General—Our Twenty-three Fellow-Prisoners—Concluding Remarks.

On February 18th, 1916, our whole party of twenty-five embarked in the third-class carriage that had been reserved for us and started for Belgrade, Budapest, Vienna, and home.

Every member of the party had been provided with a sleeping bag and a small linen sack containing enough provisions for three or four days together with a plate, knife, fork, spoon, and cup. One member had charge of an enormous glass carboy filled with our beautiful Vrintse drinking water, so that we should be independent of all local water supplies. Every package, large or small, bore two labels with conspicuous red stripes and a distinctive number. The numbers corresponded to the lists in duplicate, which were in the possession of Mr. Jones, who acted as baggage master, and of the Heads of the Unit. Throughout the journey, and especially at every change of carriage, these lists were frequently checked, to ensure that nothing should be lost or stolen on the way. It is due to the careful watchfulness of our "Little Brother"

that we eventually reached London without the loss of a single package of any kind, although the total number was not less than 120.

As far as Vienna we had the pleasure of travelling under armed escort in the shape of two Hungarian non-commissioned officers. One was a well-to-do farmer, the other a commercial traveller, and both had seen much service in the present war. The latter, an elderly man, had won for himself a high military decoration for saving the life of an Austrian general. During the famous retreat of 1914, although himself wounded, he had swum across the river Save with the wounded general on his back. Both were very pleasant fellows and did much to make our journey comfortable, besides telling us many interesting facts about the war. They were evidently very proud of having been chosen to accompany us.

We knew that at Krushevatz we should have but half an hour in which to change trains. Here it was immediately obvious that we were in the hands not of Austrians, but of Germans, as there was a total lack of that courtesy which had always characterised the former in all their dealings with us. Not only were the German officials curt and almost rude in their answers to our request that our heavy luggage might be moved from one train to the other, but they did not take any steps to comply with our request, although there was ample time for the purpose. Consequently we missed the connection and had to wait some six or seven hours at Krushevatz. This was a matter of but little moment, as many of our members had never before visited Krushevatz, and we were glad of the opportunity of showing them so

characteristic a specimen of ancient Serbian architecture as the Royal Palace Chapel of Lazar (Fig. 27), the last of the Serbian Tsars, who perished on the fatal field of Kossovo in A.D. 1389. The beautiful interlacing stonework of the circular windows, the carved double-headed Serbian eagles, and the effective double or treble red lines of bonding brickwork, reminiscent of Imperial Roman work, of which it is doubtless a direct descendant, did not fail to excite the admiration of even the most inartistic of our party. Of the secular buildings of the palace itself nothing now remains save a solitary tower with a gateway at its base.

Our guards also had never seen Krushevatz, and, although nominally in charge of the party, soon gave up any attempt to lead and allowed one of us to act as cicerone and to take them wherever we pleased. Krushevatz was in a terribly dirty and dilapidated state, having been much damaged by the enemy and by a great explosion some months before. It was sad to see whole rows of shops with which we had been very familiar in the past now roofless and completely gutted.

Our enforced delay gave us also the opportunity of visiting some former acquaintances of the Brunn (Moravian) Medical Mission, who were working here and who received us very kindly ; one of the doctors, whom we had previously met at Vrnstse, invited several members of the party to tea at his rooms. As we were walking in the town we heard shouts from a window, and found they proceeded from some former Serbian patients who were now in a Krushevatz hospital and who were delighted to see us again.

At Krushevatz railway station an amusing little incident occurred. As I walked up the platform I passed a little group of non-commissioned officers and soldiers, Germans and Austrians, and heard one of them ask, "Who are all these ladies; they seem to be talking English?" "Yes," said I, answering the question; "we are the English Mission from Vrnjatchka Banja." "Oh, then perhaps you can read this?" said another man pushing forward and holding out his sleeve, on which was embroidered in large letters the word "GIBRALTAR." "Certainly; but how did you come by that?" said I with some surprise, not being as well versed in military regimental history as perhaps I should have been. "Oh, we were fighting side by side with the English some time ago." "Indeed, then we were friends once; let us shake hands," and I held out mine. But he folded his arms and turned away. "If you do not like the word, why not cut it off." I called after him chaffingly; "that is easily done." He drew himself up, scowled at me, and said proudly, "My Kaiser gave me that; it's a mark of honour"; then turned on his heel and walked away. The other men, mostly Austrians, were evidently annoyed at the rudeness of their comrade, saying it was war-time and that they hoped I would excuse him. I laughed and said we had just come from Vrnjtsa, where we had been under the Austro-Hungarians, who never behaved to us with anything but politeness, and the sympathy of the rest of the crowd was obviously on my side. I subsequently learnt, what perhaps I ought to have known, that a Hanoverian contingent had shared in the glories of the defence of

Gibraltar in the eighteenth century and had thus acquired the right to bear the word "Gibraltar" on their sleeves for ever after.

An uncomfortable night journey in another third-class carriage brought us by daylight to the neighbourhood of Lapovo, where our train, leaving the valley of the main Morava, turned off to pursue the route to Belgrade. Very empty and deserted was the unfortunate country through which we passed. The railway traffic was practically wholly in the hands of the German military. At some stations there was special provision for refreshments for soldiers, which our escort always arranged that we should partake of. At one place there was a wooden shed where tea, coffee, and biscuits were being distributed gratis. On another occasion we saw soup being ladled out to the soldiers, who scrambled out of the train for the purpose; so we lined up too. A few words of Magyar acted as usual as a talisman, and on this occasion produced the result of three soldiers trying to fill Mrs. Berry's mug at once.

We were interested to see how busy the enemy were in the construction of extensive sidings at some of the stations through which we passed. These were evidently intended for the accumulation of military trains. The work was being done by Russian prisoners. The elaborate but as yet unfinished trenches which were being constructed at strategic points in the valley near Belgrade were also of interest.

Our arrival at Belgrade early on the following afternoon was marked by the same lack of courtesy

on the part of the German authorities that we had noticed at Krushevatz. For a long time no one paid any attention at all to us ; then we were uncere- moniously bundled into a large waiting-room and left there till 6 o'clock next morning, when the train left for Belgrade. We spent the night very com- fortably in our sleeping bags on the floor and tables, being disturbed only by stray passengers who kept on walking through our improvised dormitory. Our two Hungarians were furious with the Germans for their rudeness, and kept on saying apologetically : " Wait till you get into Hungary, and then you will see how different it will be. There everybody will be polite to you." And they were quite right, as events proved.

As the through train by which we were to go to Budapest stopped only twenty minutes at Belgrade, we, remembering Krushevatz, were anxious about our heavy luggage, of which we had about sixty pieces. At the suggestion of our Hungarian friends arrangements were made with some Russian prisoners that they should help in transshipping our luggage when the time came. When the train came in, sure enough the German station officials refused to put the luggage into the train, saying there was no time. But our Hungarian couriers (we can hardly call them guards) were not to be baulked. They worked furiously, and, helped by Dr. Christopherson, Mr. Jones, the Chaplain and others, they succeeded in getting the last trunk into the van just as the train was moving off, the railway officials doing nothing to help us. We afterwards heard that another British Mission which had passed through Belgrade a week

or two before us had been less fortunate and had lost the whole of their luggage at this station.

The journey through Sirmia and across the level plain of Central Hungary was quite interesting. It was Sunday and swarms of Hungarian peasants were to be seen on the platforms. Many of them tried to get into our carriage, where there was plenty of room. But our Hungarians, who took as much care of us as a hen with a brood of chickens, kept them at bay. To one party who tried to force their way in they said that we had just come from a cholera camp, whereupon the would-be invaders fled precipitately. On another occasion half-a-dozen farmers succeeded in effecting an entrance and refused to budge. The conductor of the train took their part, and a fierce and wordy argument ensued between the civilian and the military authorities. The latter said we were not to be interfered with, the former insisting that passengers had a right to occupy the empty seats. Finally the quarrel became so violent that our guards buckled on their swords and took down their rifles, and for a moment we thought that blood was about to be shed on our behalf. However, a compromise was arranged by which four of the intruders, who were going only as far as the next station, were allowed to stay. In a few minutes our visitors were exchanging cigarettes and chatting amicably with our guards, a subject of conversation mutually satisfactory to both having been discovered—namely abuse of “these pigs of Germans.”

Shortly afterwards we were agreeably surprised by the entry of a pleasant young man in the uniform of the German Imperial Guard and wearing the Iron

Cross. He sat down among us and stayed a long time, telling us that he came from Hamburg, which was "half-English," that he had visited England many times in his yacht, and had played in a championship tennis tournament at Wimbledon. "The English and the Hamburgers are cousins," he said, "for the English came from our neighbourhood," which was true enough, as the original Engeland was close to the mouth of the Elbe. He spoke almost perfect English, and took such a fancy to our party that upon arrival at Budapest he insisted on taking nearly the whole Mission to see the sights of the town while our luggage was being transported to another railway station. In Budapest we walked about in perfect freedom and seemed to attract but little attention—certainly none of an unfriendly character. We felt that what our escort told us at Belgrade about the courtesy we should meet with in Hungary was quite justified. In fact our treatment by the Hungarians throughout our captivity bore out a little remark made to us once when we were discussing with a Hungarian officer our position as a Red Cross unit in enemy hands. He admitted that we were technically neither "prisoners of war" nor "interned." In reply to the conundrum "Then what are we?" he answered, "Let us say *guests*." And as the Austro-Hungarian authorities supplied us with rations, left us our stores, and asked very little of us in return, "guests" was perhaps a description not so very far wide of the mark.

We arrived at Vienna late at night, and being unable to obtain accommodation at any hotel, as they were all full, we induced the station authorities

to put three first-class carriages on to a siding, and in them we slept most comfortably. A whole day at Vienna was spent by some of us in official business at the American Embassy and elsewhere, while most of the party wandered about the city with complete freedom and without the necessity of having even a pass. We met with no discourtesy or unpleasantness of any sort. The Red Cross seemed to be looked on everywhere with respect, soldiers being always ready to salute, in spite of the enemy uniform. Some of our party saw in a shop some "Gott strafe England" brooches, which they wished to buy as curiosities. The shop people were much embarrassed and refused to sell them, saying "Those are German, not Austrian; you cannot buy them." Sir Rudolf Slatin, late of the Soudan, an old friend of Dr. Christopherson's, now actively engaged on Red Cross work in his native country, met us on arrival at the station and was most kind and hospitable.

We were told that photographic negatives and prints as well as picture post-cards would be stopped at the frontier and that they should be deposited with the police, but we were allowed to retain our cameras and unused films. The police officials were courteous and lenient, and no examination of our luggage was made. Gold, of course, had to be given up, but we received in exchange a cheque on a Swiss bank and Austrian paper money at the rate of 44½ kronen for the English sovereign or its equivalent. The American Embassy kindly took our tickets and arranged for our journey in comfort to Switzerland, and Sir Rudolf Slatin came to see us off, bestowing a farewell gift upon our nurses in the shape of a huge box of chocolates.

Altogether we had spent a most enjoyable and interesting day in the capital of the enemy.

On the following day at Bludenz, in the Vorarlberg, within sight of the Swiss frontier, we were met by the Austrian military commandant, who told us that he regretted that we should have to be detained there for a few days before being allowed to leave the country. This was to ensure that any military information we might have obtained on our journey through Serbia and Austria should be stale before we reached Switzerland and freedom. There was nothing unreasonable in this, and we contrived to spend a very enjoyable nine days in this beautiful mountain spot, enjoying a full view of the snowy Alps and being free, within certain limits, to wander about and take long walks into the surrounding country.

Both military and civilians behaved to us with courtesy. The hotel proprietors treated us as ordinary tourists. The peasants and the townspeople always gave us the familiar Tyrolese greeting "Grüss Gott!" and showed much friendly interest in us and our doings in Serbia. It was interesting to read every day the official bulletins at the post office, which seemed to show that Austrians and Germans were making continual progress in all directions.

All articles of food, especially meat, butter and milk, were distinctly scarce, and everybody seemed very tired of the war.

On March 2nd we passed through Feldkirch, where we and our luggage were subject to a fairly thorough but entirely courteous search. All articles of copper, of which we had but few, and a few stray souvenirs such as tops of shells and an old Russian bayonet, the

gift of a Hungarian officer, were taken away from us, but our little stock of food was not interfered with. Some had brought on their photographs instead of leaving them at Vienna and were much rejoiced when the photographs, having been examined, were all allowed to pass. As we crossed the frontier we felt like so many Rip van Winkles or inhabitants of Barbarossa's underground castle suddenly emerging into sunlight. A gloriously fine day enhanced the beautiful scenery through which we passed to Zürich on this our first day of freedom from captivity. As we had not seen an English newspaper of later date than October 3rd, and, with one or two exceptions, had received no letters during the same period, we were proportionately delighted to hear what had been going on. Both Sir Cecil Hertslet, Consul-General at Zurich, and the British Minister at Berne, met us at the station and were most hospitable and kind. The former was good enough to give us a long epitome of the war news of the last five months, of which we were practically in complete ignorance, and which was a real treat to all of us.

Our "Fairy Godmother"—to return to the simile in the preceding chapter—seems to have both watched over us throughout our journey from Vrnstse and handed us on to her sisters in the countries through which we passed. In Switzerland not only were we welcomed and fêted by our country men and women, but even in German-speaking Zürich, when some of the party went into a restaurant where music was going on in the evening, all the company present started singing "It's a long way to Tipperary" in their honour. When we reached Pontarlier and entered France,

although it was quite late in the evening, we found a table prepared for us and were met by a member of the Municipal Council, who apologised for the absence of the Mayor on account of the notice of our arrival having been so short. The military authorities, with equal courtesy, on their own initiative provided us with free passes as far as Havre, and saw that two entire first-class carriages were reserved for us to Paris. Only in Britain was there no "Fairy God-mother." From Havre we had to take our own tickets; at Southampton we were curtly informed by the railway officials that seats in the London train could not be reserved for our party. Then we knew indeed that we were once more in dear Old England!

Our year of exile was over: we had seen much, learnt much, endured—well, considerably less than anxious friends at home imagined. Only four of the original Unit who left England in January, 1915, were with the return party in March, 1916. We had had various alterations of *personnel*, but we may say that practically all who joined us were animated by enthusiasm and zeal, which caused them to work well together. Nearly all the members of the original Mission had been carefully selected by the Heads of the Unit themselves, and were tied to them by a bond of loyalty which was very difficult to shake, even under the most trying circumstances. Many of the trained nurses had themselves held posts as matrons or ward sisters of hospitals. They knew the value of hospital discipline, acted loyally up to it, and were of great use in instilling the same spirit into their less experienced colleagues.

A similar spirit of loyalty and devotion to duty was to be observed among nearly all the V.A.D.'s, whose energy and willingness to undertake any task, however laborious or uninteresting, that fell to their lot was most remarkable and encouraging. Especial praise should perhaps be awarded to Mrs. Eldred, who for months toiled away at the important but comparatively dull post of storekeeper, relieved only at times by the more exciting work of helping in the operating theatre or relieving one of the nurses in the wards.

If a little friction occasionally occurred between the trained nurses and the untrained volunteers, who were so anxious to share in the work of nursing the sick and wounded, it was not serious and did not cause any real trouble.

Of one's medical colleagues and the eagerness with which they threw themselves, one and all, into their work it is difficult to speak with too much praise.

The English orderlies (or rather the English-speaking, for two were Americans) all possessed the rare and valuable qualities of submission to constituted authority, combined with a spirit of enterprise, energy, and initiative that made their services most valuable and never to be forgotten.

We had purposely brought with us none of the class of the paid English orderlies who are often taken by English units to do the rougher work. Not that such men do not work well, but we knew that an abundance of cheap Austrian prisoner labour was to be had, and we knew that these would be more adaptable to the habits of the country. The relations between our orderlies and the Austrians were those of officers and soldiers, and discipline was maintained without any

emphasis on the distinction between the free man and the prisoner, which would have been the only sanction in the case of orders given by Englishmen of the same military rank as the Austrians themselves. A paid English orderly could hardly command the same sort of affectionate loyalty as did men like our volunteer orderlies, who would unquestionably have held commissioned rank in the Austrian Army.*

It is not quite so easy to manage a voluntary unit in a foreign country as some may think. The difficulty of doing so is accentuated when the unit happens to be in the enemy's hands and delicate negotiations have to be carried on.

Some people seemed to think that when the Unit became captive the causes of its cohesion disappeared and it was a case of every man for himself. The various Austrian commandants, especially the Prince, who was always accessible to everyone, complained occasionally of their time being taken up by members calling with individual requests, complaints, or suggestions, and these proceedings sometimes gave rise to embarrassing misunderstandings.

Excellent material for a book might be found in a general account of Foreign Units in Serbia; these played an important part, and are to a great extent an instance of a new field of human activity developed by this war. "How to choose the right people" would be a sub-section for which those who are acquainted with selecting bodies seem to think there is much need. "Hints for Heads of Units in their difficult task" would also form a useful chapter, and

* It should be mentioned that no one in our Mission, except the trained sisters and one of the junior medical officers, received any salary.

should deal with the following subjects:—How to combine the discipline required by an organisation in war-time with full scope for individual initiative and the utilisation of individual talent in the members; how to find out and attend to complaints, and not be unduly moved by criticism; how to know what to expect from human nature and to be neither unduly optimistic nor surprised at anything which occurs; how in fact to drive “a team of zebras” as the Head of a Mission once described the members, so that the coach shall neither upset on the way nor take a wrong turning! It is to be hoped that the chapter would proceed from the sympathetic pen of a Head, for we tremble to think what might be contained in one written by a discontented member!

In our own Unit we met with criticism of course, doubtless much of it justified. A candid friend would tell us one day that we were “despots” and that the Unit was on the point of revolt, while the next day we might be informed that we did not know how to exert our authority! We have been told, however, that our Unit had less friction than any in Serbia. How far this is truth and how far fiction we do not know. Two events gave us much satisfaction and cheered us up when we were inclined to be down-hearted. One was the unsolicited testimonial from the Serbians recorded at the end of Chapter XVI., and the other was a beautiful souvenir, equally unsolicited and even more unexpected, which was presented to us by our twenty-three fellow-prisoners shortly after our return home. Some verses written hurriedly to be used in returning thanks on this

occasion fairly well represented our feelings and may well be used to end this little volume.

In conclusion we would make a few general remarks. We described our position during our captivity as that of persons surrounded by thick fog, and said that in this fog Rumour discerned strange visions. We still look at a wall of fog—the Veil which hangs over the war and the future—and we still see visions. These are some of the visions we see in the mist: Serbia, restored to independence, reviving from the martyrdom through which she has passed, enlarged, not by the conquest of an unwilling population, but by joyful union with her brothers in race, Croats, Bosniaks, Slovenes, so many of whom served as volunteers in her armies, or gave themselves up as willing prisoners from the ranks of the invaders.

We see the Austrian Empire consigned to the limbo of antiquity, or decently buried as befitting what she is, the dead bones of a mediæval empire. "Every people has the right to choose the sovereignty under which it shall live" is one of the principles enunciated by President Wilson in his recent historic speech on the possibility of a League of Nations. If this principle is to be the basis of the European States in the future there will be many changes in the lands which now constitute the realms of Austria.

Hungary, in her attitude to the British Missions, was a chivalrous foe, and Hungary in the past viewed England and English institutions with admiration and affection. May Hungarian patriotism cease to look on Hungary from the point of view of Arpad, the Magyar conqueror, as a preserve for Magyar development safeguarded by Magyar predominance, but rather

from the wider outlook of the welfare of humanity, with equal rights and opportunities for all the dwellers upon the soil.

Lastly—and this is more than a vision—may the work of the British Missions and other intercourse between Serbians and Britons during this war result in a permanent bond between our two races. Each has much to learn from the other and a closer friendship between the two will be for the benefit of both.

J. B.

To our Twenty-three "Fellow-Prisoners" on the Occasion of their Presentation of a Testimonial of their regard to Mr. and Mrs. Berry at the Imperial Hotel, London, Thursday, March 23rd, 1916.

We said when we quitted dear Serbia,
Where so much of our effort seemed vain,
We would never, oh ! never, oh ! never,
Be Heads of a Mission again.
We thought of our many shortcomings,
We knew it was frequently said,
That whatever went wrong with the Unit,
Was always the fault of the Head.

We feared when at last they were finished,
Those months of detention and cramp,
That the Unit would all spring asunder,
Like a shattered electrical lamp.
But this day on our thoughts and our feelings
A different complexion now sheds,
And coals which are brilliantly burning,
You are heaping indeed on our heads.

I think of the days which are over,
When the Austrians stood at the gates,
When Doctors were washing the dishes
And Sisters were scrubbing the grates.
When a Diplomat reigned in the kitchen,
The Chaplain cleaned boots in the hall,
And anything else that was wanted,
The V.A.D.'s tackled it all !

And I think that if Serbia or Russia,
Or anywhere else in the world,
Should ask for a British contingent
Again at their heads to be hurled,
That in spite of the Past and its troubles,
The summons might not be in vain,
And some of us still would be willing,
To go off together again.

F. M. D. B.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE UNIT.

No.	NAME.	ARRIVAL AT VRNJATCHKA BANJA.	DEPARTURE FROM VRNJATCHKA BANJA.
*1. James Berry, B.S., F.R.C.S. . . .	Senior Surgeon	{ 1915 (N.S.) Feb. 11	Feb. 18, 1916
*2. F. May Dickinson Berry, M.D., B.S. . . .	Anæsthetist and Physician		
3. Laurence E. Panting, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.S. . . .	Surgeon	"	May 9, 1915
4. Ernest Ulysses Williams, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. . . .	Radiographer and Physician	"	May 27, 1915
5. Dorothy Chick, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. . . .	House-Surgeon	"	May 5, 1915
6. Miss K. Parkinson	Dresser	"	"
†7. Mr. Donald C. Norris . . .	"	"	April 26, 1915
8. Miss S. Irvine Robertson . .	Sister in Charge	"	June 9, 1915
9. Miss Lena Barber	Nursing Sister	"	May 9, 1915
10. Miss Florence Bartleet . .	"	"	May 26, 1915
11. Hon. Florence Colborne . .	"	"	June 9, 1915
12. Miss Julia Gore	"	"	May 26, 1915
13. Miss Margaret Hurley . . .	"	"	June 9, 1915
14. Miss Annie J. Pearce . . .	"	"	"
15. Miss Jessie Sutherland . .	"	"	"
*16. Miss Catherine West . . .	"	"	Feb. 18, 1916
*17. Mrs. Elsie F. Eldred . . .	Lady Orderly	"	"
18. Mrs. Cora J. Gordon . . .	"	" till & Sept. 27, till	Aug. 7, 1915 Oct. 30, 1915
19. Miss Dorothea Oakley . . .	"	Feb. 11	May 19, 1915
20. Mrs. J. Agnes Panting . . .	"	"	May 9, 1915
21. Miss Ena M. Stevenson . . .	"	"	"
22. Mr. Jan Gordon	Gentleman Orderly	" till & Sept. 27, till	Aug. 7, 1915 Oct. 30, 1915
23. Mr. William Gwin	"	Feb. 11	Oct. 1, 1915
24. Mr. Cecil de B. Howard . .	"	"	April 26, 1915
25. Mr. Francis H. Schwind . .	"	"	May 27, 1915
26. Miss Lucia Creighton . . .	Cook	"	May 19, 1915
27. Mr. Walter Lyon Blease . .	Gentleman Orderly	April 18	Oct. 30, 1915
*28. Miss Harriott Davies . . .	Sister in Charge	"	Feb. 18, 1916

No.	NAME.	ARRIVAL AT VRNJATCHEA BANJA.	DEPARTURE FROM VRNJATCHEA BANJA.
29.	Miss Agnes Miller . . . Nursing Sister . . .	1915 (N.S.) April 18	July 20, 1915
*30.	Miss Ruth C. Thomas . . . " . . .	"	Feb. 18, 1916
*31.	Miss Susan Hall . . . " . . .	"	"
*32.	Miss Margaret Barber . . . Lady Orderly . . .	"	"
*33.	Miss Annie J. Dickinson . . . " . . .	May 12	"
*34.	Miss Margaret Hyett . . . " . . .	"	"
*35.	Miss Mabel Ingram . . . Dresser and Radiographer	"	"
36.	A. Helen Boyle, M.D., L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. Ed. . . . Physician . . .	May 28	Aug. 15, 1915
37.	Miss Ethel M. Thackeray . . . Lady Orderly . . .	"	"
38.	Miss E. Mary Walters . . . " . . .	"	July 20, 1915
*39.	Ada McLaren, M.B., D.P.H. . . . Surgeon . . .	June 23	Feb. 18, 1916
*40.	Isobel Inglis, M.B., Ch.B. . . . Physician . . .	"	"
*41.	Miss Fanny Amott . . . Nursing Sister . . .	"	"
*42.	Miss Alice Brock . . . " . . .	"	"
*43.	Miss Elizabeth Cameron . . . " . . .	"	"
*44.	Miss Mary E. Griffin . . . " . . .	"	"
*45.	Miss Gertrude M. Hammond . . . " . . .	"	"
46.	Mrs. Dorothy Cowen . . . Lady Orderly, . . .	"	July 16, 1915
47.	Mrs. Olive Jourdain . . . " . . .	"	Sept. 21, 1915
*48.	Mr. Herbert Jones . . . Gentleman Orderly. . .	June 28	Feb. 18, 1916
*49.	Miss Ria Murray . . . Lady Orderly . . .	Sept. 6	"
*50.	Mr. George Lingner . . . Gentleman Orderly . . .	Sept. 13	"
*51.	J. B. Christopherson, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.P. . . . Surgeon . . .	"	"
*52.	Rev. George Simpson . . . Refugee Visitor. . .	October	"
*53.	Mrs. Madeline Simpson . . . " . . .	"	"
*54.	Mrs. Sarah Branson . . . " . . .	"	"

Those marked thus * were prisoners at Vrnjatchka Banja under the Austro-Hungarians from November 10, 1915, till February 18, 1916.

† Now Lieut. D. C. Norris, R.A.M.C.

APPENDIX II

STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURE,
JANUARY, 1915—MARCH 7TH, 1916.*

	£	s.	d.
Instruments (including splints, X-ray plant, etc.)	355	2	3
Surgical Dressings	471	2	1
Drugs	291	2	9
Hospital Equipment (including beds, bedding, pyjamas, hardware, etc.)	835	1	10
Part Cost of Thresh Disinfector	34	12	11
† Food Stores from England	534	14	9
Clothes sent from England	237	10	0
Boots " " "	86	6	6
Outfit (nurses' uniforms, etc.)	228	0	3
† Salaries (trained nurses and one junior medical officer)	902	15	9
Housekeeping at Vrnstse (food and washing for staff)	615	14	6
Hospital Maintenance (including ironmongery, materials, payment for needlework, tobacco for patients, etc.)	120	4	6
Buildings and Repairs (including typhus baraque, £156 2s. 6d.)	230	14	6
Miscellaneous (including telegrams, etc.)	37	18	0
Wages and Gratuities to Serbians and Austrian Prisoners	158	14	8
Travelling Expenses (54 members) outward £373 9s. 8d. } } 1,142 15 0 } " } £769 5s. 4d. }			
" }			
Carriage, Packing, etc.	91	1	2
Maintenance Charges in London, petty cash, etc.)	260	2	10
Total	6,633	14	3
<hr/>			
Expenditure on Slaughter-house (not defrayed from the general funds of the Mission)	423	12	0
Total	£7,057	6	3

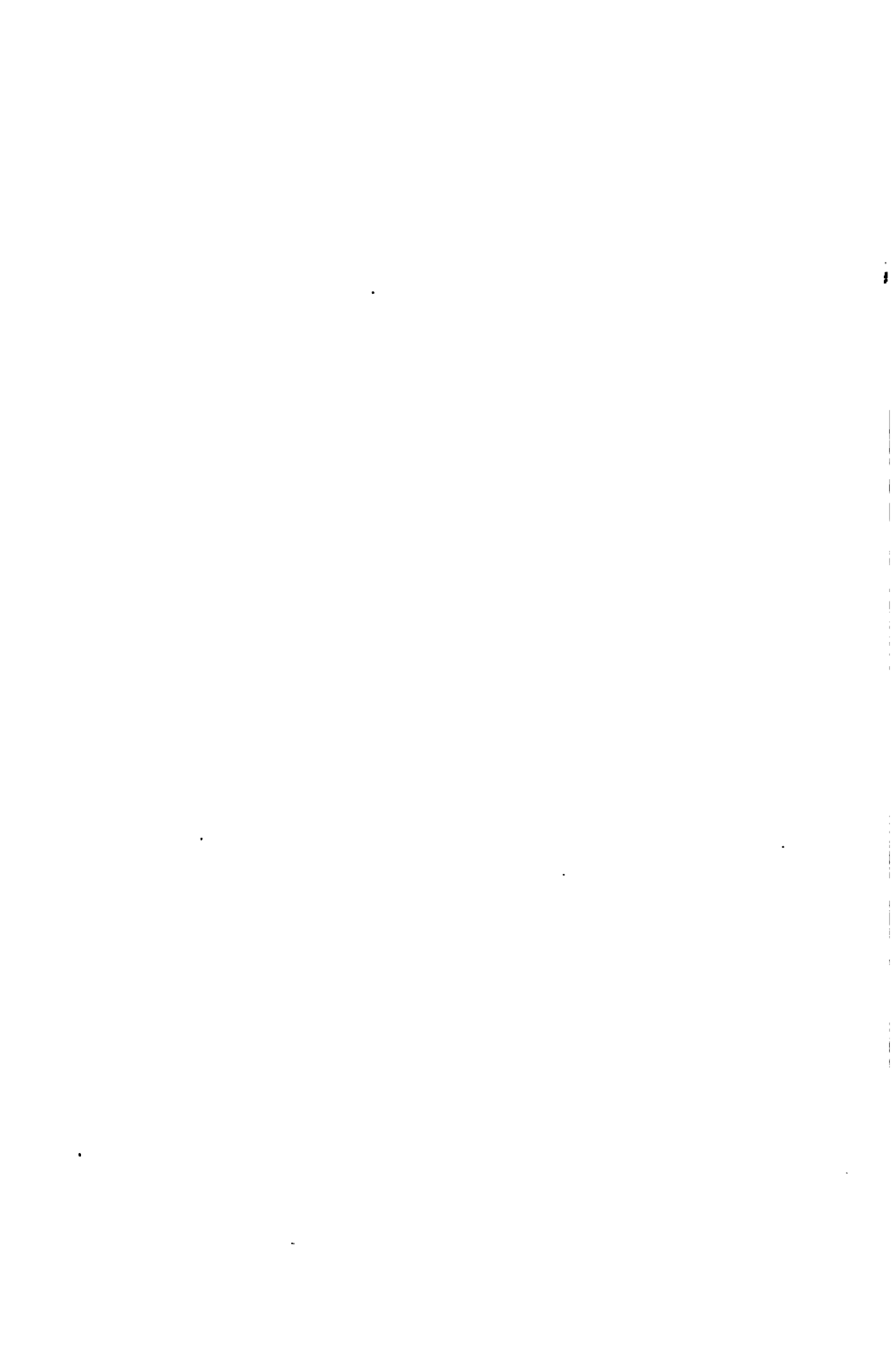
* These tables are approximate as the exact auditing of the accounts has not yet, at the time of going to press, been completed.

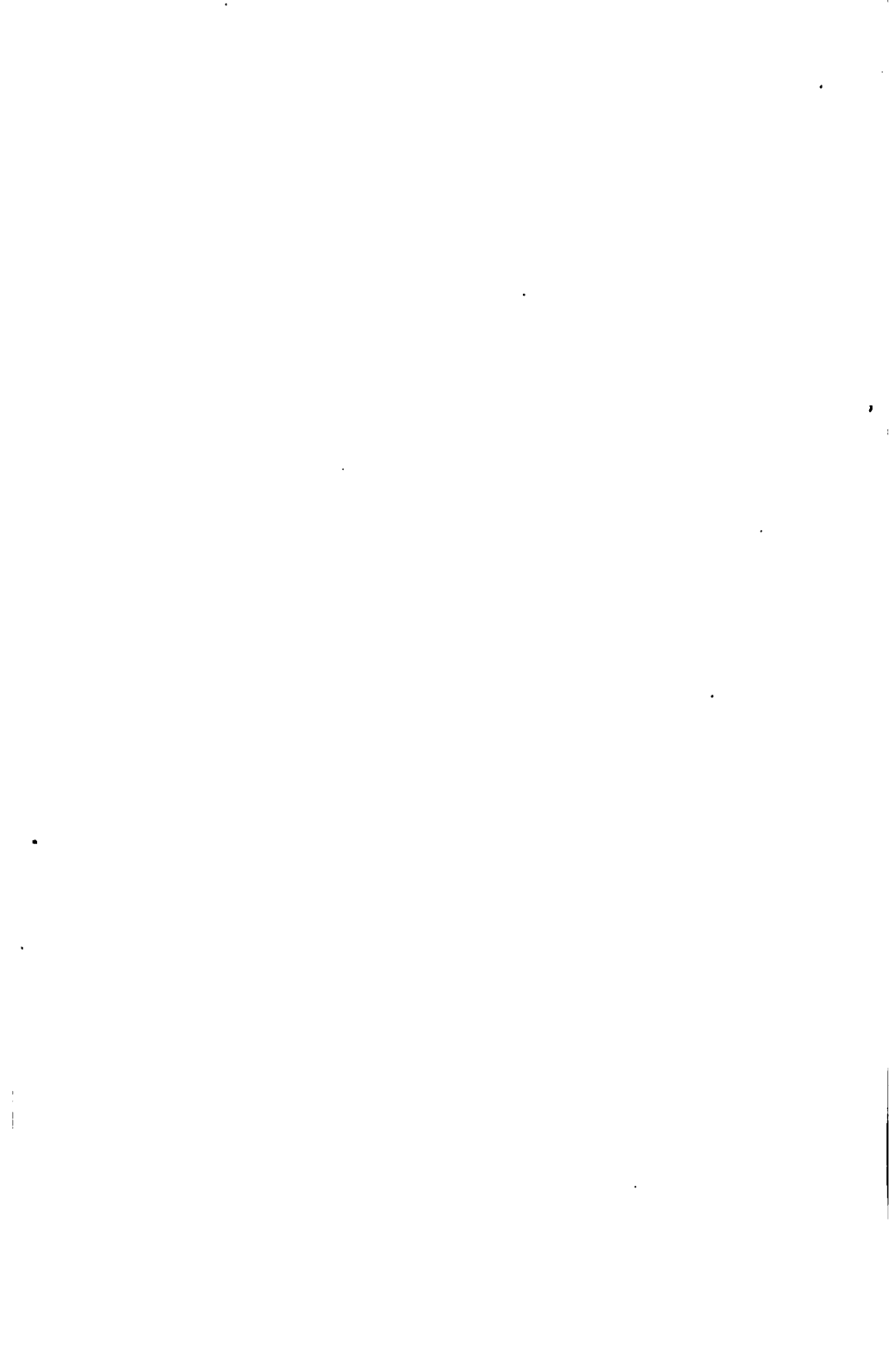
† Food stores from England were used partly for the staff and partly to supplement the rations of the patients. The Serbian Government allowed 3 dinars per head daily for rations for the staff and provided rations for the patients.

† A doctor and nurse sent out to Vrnats by our Committee in September were prevented by the Bulgarians from reaching their destination. They have not been reckoned as members of the Mission, nor are the expenses incurred in connection with them included in these accounts.

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